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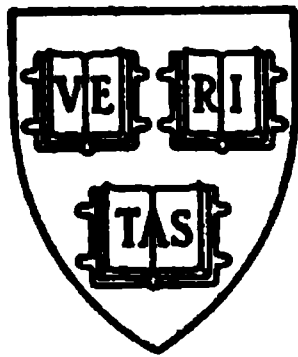
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2672

“SIR ROBERT PEEL”

FROM HIS PRIVATE PAPERS

EDITED FOR HIS TRUSTEES BY

CHARLES STUART PARKER

SOMETIME M.P. FOR THE COUNTY AND FOR THE CITY OF PERTS
AND LATE FELLOW OF UNIVERSITY COLLEGE, OXFORD

WITH A CHAPTER ON HIS LIFE AND CHARACTER
BY HIS GRANDSON, THE HON. GEORGE PEEL

“2”

IN THREE VOLS.—VOL. II.

LONDON

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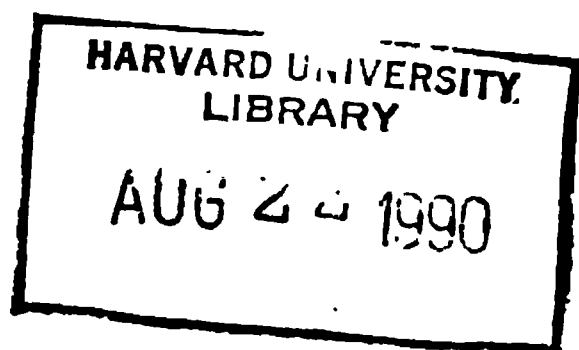
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*The Duke of Wellington and
Sir Robert Peel,*

from the portrait by Kneller in the possession of Sir H. Lytton -

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SIR ROBERT PEEL

VOL. II.

PREFACE

THESE volumes are published under the authority of Sir Robert Peel's Trustees, the late Viscount Hardinge and the Right Hon. Viscount Peel.

The period dealt with extends from the death of Canning in 1827 to the death of Peel in 1850.

It includes the Administrations of Goderich and of Wellington; the passing of the Roman Catholic Relief Bill; the revenge of its opponents in overthrowing the Duke's Government; the Administration of Lord Grey; the prolonged contest over the Reform Bill; the ruinous downfall of the Tories; the slow and toilsome building up of the Conservative party; Peel's refusals to take office in 1832 and in 1839; his short Ministry in 1834-35; six years more in opposition; and lastly, his great Administration (1841-46) and few closing years.

Of the three-and-twenty years comprised, three are memorable for crises in his career reviewed in later life by himself. On the Roman Catholic Relief Bill he prepared a Memoir incorporating 'all the documents that appeared necessary or useful for the complete elucidation of the events' attending its origin and progress into law; of his first Ministry he left a Narrative with a few selected letters; on the Repeal of the Corn Laws he also wrote a Memoir. All these were published soon after his death.

Hence arose a dilemma in editing his general corre-

spondence. To reprint the most interesting letters of those three years would overfill the book; to exclude them altogether would impair its value as a continuous record of Peel's public life from his own hand. It seemed best to take a middle course. The Memoirs are briefly cited, but so far only as may suffice to keep the biographical interest unbroken.

One point needs special explanation. In his Corn Law Memoir, Sir Robert Peel embodied letters of historical importance which had passed between him and the Queen. When the Memoir was published in 1857, these could not be included; the events were then too recent, and many of the actors were still upon the stage. But now, by her Majesty's gracious permission, the letters are given in full. Readers will kindly allow for any difficulties caused by their being disjoined from the original context.

The Trustees have ventured also to submit to her Majesty a request for leave to insert similar letters selected from the correspondence of other years with the Queen and Prince. By Sir Robert Peel's instructions, no public use could be made of any such communication without her Majesty's express approval. This has been most graciously accorded, enhancing the dramatic and personal interest of the political contests described.

The mass of papers (in all about 100,000) bequeathed to the Trustees furnished materials in formidable quantity and of great value. But it was found necessary to draw largely from other sources.

Among the tables doing duty (for want of facts) about Sir Robert Peel is one that 'he kept a copy of every letter he ever wrote.' Had that been true, an editor's task would have been more simple. But it is not true.

In youth, as Irish Secretary, Peel had his letters copied into quarto volumes in all the pomp of red morocco

with gilt edges. In later life, as Secretary of State, Prime Minister, or private Member of Parliament, for thirty years he had no such system. Letters of great interest, dashed off in haste to friends whom he could trust, as a rule were not preserved in copies or in draft. 'After 1827,' he says himself, 'when out of office, I very rarely, if ever, took copies of the letters which I wrote.' Mr. Croker writes, 'I keep all your letters for you.' Sir James Graham, at Peel's request, supplied many for the Memoirs; and those written to other colleagues could often be obtained only from inheritors of the original letters.

The Duke of Wellington most liberally granted every facility for consulting the rich collection at Apsley House, and with the kind assistance of Lieut.-Colonel Coxon a large number of Peel's uncopied letters were found there. He also wrote frequently to Wellington's confidential friend the Right Hon. Charles Arbuthnot. These letters—often secret, never copied—have been kept safe, and lent, by Mrs. Arthur Arbuthnot. The letters to Mr. Gladstone were lent, some years ago, by him; letters to Sir James Graham have been furnished by his daughter, Mrs. Charles Baring, letters to Lord Aberdeen by his son, Lord Stanmore; letters to Lord Hardinge by his son, the late Lord Hardinge; letters to Mr. Goulburn by his grandson, Major Goulburn. Warm thanks are due to all.

Peel's letters to Mr. Croker having been mostly published, no application was made for them, and none was made to the general public, lest there should not be room for what might be supplied. The papers of a great and busy statesman for thirty-eight years soon fill three volumes.

The book is indebted to Mr. Murray for some important papers preserved by his late father; to the Dean of Salisbury for a letter praising the administration of criminal law in Scotland; to Viscount Peel, to Mr. Murray,

and to Mr. James R. Thursfield for the care with which they have read the proofs, and for valuable suggestions; to Mr. Hallam Murray for pains taken in preparing the illustrations.

Aid has been obtained from several published works—Mr. Thursfield's excellent short *Life of Peel*, Mr. Shaw-Lefevre's '*Peel and O'Connell*,' Mr. Fitzpatrick's '*Letters of O'Connell*,' '*Lord Ellenborough's Letters*' edited by Lord Colchester, and the *Life of Sir George Pollock* by Mr. Low, of the *Prince Consort* by Sir Theodore Martin, of *Cobden* by Mr. Morley, and of *Lord George Bentinck* by Mr. Disraeli. To these must be added the '*Greville Memoirs*,' and Mr. Walpole's '*History of England from 1815*,' a book most valuable for reference, and to be admired for careful verification of facts.

Lastly, the Editor is under special obligations to the Right Hon. Sir Frederick Peel, K.C.M.G., for accurate information on points of which he could speak from personal knowledge, and for consenting to the publication of the interesting letters addressed to himself and to his mother, Lady Peel, upon his father's death, and by Lady Peel to the Queen, and to a few of her husband's dearest friends. Without some such expressions of submissive grief and Christian consolation, the correspondence must have been brought to a more sudden and painful close.

It remains to say what has and what has not been here attempted.

In the instructions to his Trustees Sir Robert Peel thus indicates his general purpose:

'Considering that this collection includes the whole of my confidential correspondence for a period extending from the year 1812 to the time of my decease; that during a considerable portion of that period I was engaged in the service of the Crown; and that when not so employed I took

an active part in parliamentary business ; it is highly probable that much of that correspondence will be interesting, and calculated to throw light upon the conduct and character of public men, and upon the events of the time.'

He meant to leave materials for history, and that in using them full justice should be done to those who acted with him. Much space has therefore been assigned to letters that throw light upon the characters and conduct of his colleagues.

One correspondence recorded is unique as having been carried on for twenty years between the two Conservative chiefs, a great civilian, and a great soldier, leading their party, the one in the popular, the other in the hereditary House of Parliament. It shows with how much generalship these leaders managed to put off the final conflict when, as they feared, the Lords would be deprived, if not of nominal, at least of real power, and could no longer check by an appeal to the electorate any rash act of a temporary majority in one all-powerful Chamber. That service was rendered by Wellington and Peel.

Next, if not equal, in importance, and therefore in the space assigned to it, is the correspondence with Sir James Graham. His letters here given have not before been published. In style they are worthy to be read by public men who care to write good English. In substance they record the good work done together by Peel and Graham for Ireland and in Home affairs, and thus do justice, as Sir Robert Peel desired, to his most attached and most efficient colleague.

A third correspondence of singular interest was with Hardinge. It exhibits two devoted friends, soldier and civilian, separated by many thousand miles, each playing the chief part in a desperate but victorious contest, the one with foes abroad, the other with faction at home, yet

each finding time to watch with warmest sympathy the other's action, and to exchange assurances of mutual confidence and unalterable affection. Again such a series of letters is unique. There are also letters to and from Lord Ellenborough. Few know how large a part Sir Robert Peel took in the Government of India, so far as it was controlled from home. This subject fills four chapters.

Another chapter records the conflict in Scotland between Church and State. Englishmen are apt to treat that controversy as to them devoid of interest, and even of meaning. But it was due to the High Church party and to Sir Robert Peel to show what were the questions raised between them, and where he drew the line; that as regards Crown and other lay patronage he would have given to congregations full liberty of objecting to presentees, and to the Church courts unlimited power of deciding on all objections judicially without appeal; that he recognised the absolute supremacy of the Church in things spiritual, but not in dealing with civil rights of patrons or of presentees, secured by statute law, or in changing at will the constitution of her courts established by the State.

With Lord Aberdeen Peel's intercourse was not less affectionate and unreserved than with Graham or Hardinge; and if Lord Aberdeen did not, like them, attend Peel's deathbed, he is addressed by Lady Peel in her hours of deepest mourning for her husband as '*the friend* whom he most valued.' But to the letters exchanged with him. Lord Stanley, Mr. Goulburn, and Mr. Gladstone, with limited space, less justice could be done. For readers unfamiliar with foreign, colonial, and financial questions, explanations would have been required. Moreover, many of Lord Aberdeen's and of Mr. Gladstone's papers will ere long be made public; those of Lord Stanley would be more

fitly edited by his family ; and some of Mr. Goulburn's were placed out of reach by the absence of his grandson on the expedition to Khartoum.

Sir Robert Peel himself is here portrayed not in private life—as the loving husband, son, or father ; the country gentleman, fond of farming and of field sports ; the friend of science, literature, and art ; the good citizen, the loyal Churchman, the consistent Christian. Of all this there are glimpses, but the central subject is, his conduct as a public man.

On that point much has been written. He has been condemned as having broken that great political commandment : Thou shalt love thy party with all thy soul. Thou shalt not rise to power with one set of men and principles, and then use it for other principles and other men. That being the unpardonable sin imputed to him—especially at last when he gave up the Corn Laws—one object has been to show how much he sacrificed to party, and with what forbearance he applied the sound general principles of Free Trade, long since adopted and avowed by him, until at last he found himself compelled by duty to break with interests opposed to those of the nation. What forced it on him was a question that moved him deeply in 1842 and again in 1845—the question of a people's food in time of grinding poverty, or, still more, of impending famine.

Had not potatoes failed in Ireland, he had intended, in 1846, before the General Election, to purge himself and those who followed him from any old pledges, by a direct appeal to his party and to the country to give up the Corn Laws.

As it was, he risked his whole political credit and his personal character on the clear dictate of his conscience, that to avert starvation it was right to sacrifice the lower

to the higher, the old policy of his party to new necessities, and to the true interests, as he saw them, of the party itself and of the country.

On the point of honour, no man was more sensitive. Conscious of pure motives, he felt keenly the ungenerous disbelief of former followers, and of a candid friend who, in letters now published,¹ ascribed his conduct to the most ignoble causes—deliberate treachery, and abject fear, disguised by ‘the humbug of the Irish famine.’ Job’s three friends hardly matched Peel’s one. Peel might have answered as did Job: ‘God forbid that I should justify you. Till I die, I will not remove my integrity from me.’

Those who know how he was treated, will respect his strong desire that history should judge him fairly.

Insulted by suggestions that his political conduct was inspired by self-regarding motives, when he withdrew from office he would accept no customary reward. Even to his Sovereign with much delicacy and tact he made this known. While soliciting, as a favour, that a promised portrait of her Majesty and the Prince should include one of the Prince of Wales, he added that this, together with the kind regard they had expressed for him, was ‘the highest reward it was in her Majesty’s power to bestow.’

He refused a peerage, he refused the Garter, he refused a national testimonial. His family, by his instructions, declined for him a public funeral, and for themselves hereditary honours. He left the nation in his debt.

Forty years of devotion to the service of his country and Queen; then dismissal, with as much humiliation as his opponents could inflict. These stand on one side of the account; what shall stand on the other?

Two things he asked: that in the dwellings of the poor,

¹ *The Croker Papers*, iii. 51, 67-69.

whose lot he had helped to raise, his name might be sometimes remembered with goodwill ; and that posterity should do him justice.

He asked no more ; he was content to wait. Has justice yet been done to him in full ?

The men are gone who spoke of Peel as 'renegade,' 'apostate,' 'traitor.' But have they left no trace of their ill will, the mud that sticks where plenty is thrown ?

Small personal criticisms might pass, but for the hold they take on feeble minds. His manner, it is true, was apt to be constrained and frigid. 'I plead guilty,' he writes, 'to the charge of coldness ; particularly in reference to Irish candidates for office. I had early experience in that country of the danger of saying a civil word.' With favours to distribute, and secrets of the State to keep, it is not easy to cast aside reserve.

But fictions that his heart was cold, his feelings feigned, his friendships tepid, his thoughts too full of self, should be confronted with his letters to Graham and Hardinge, to Wellington and Aberdeen, and many humbler friends.

'In private intercourse he exhibited a warmer and stronger feeling of affectionate regard towards his friends than is usual in that relation when contracted in public life. He threw off reserve, and was free in his communications, beyond what is generally the case with political men' ²

He is charged with 'want of foresight,' perhaps chiefly on three grounds. He opposed the Roman Catholic claims ; he opposed the Whig Reform Bill ; he supported moderate protection of home-grown corn. His defence on each point may be read in his letters or Memoirs.

In Ireland some statesmen—Grattan, Plunket, Canning—imagined that they could give civil equality to the

² The Right Hon. E. Cardwell to Mr. Goldwin Smith.

Roman Catholic majority without endangering either the Protestant Establishment or the Legislative Union. Peel judged otherwise. To escape civil war, he granted civil equality; to save the Church and Union, he limited the county franchise. In 1868 this policy was reversed. The franchise was enlarged, and the Church was disestablished. In 1885 the franchise was again enlarged, and Ministers proposed Home Rule.

In Parliamentary Reform, Grey, Russell, Stanley, Graham, proposed to vest power in the middle class, excluding those engaged in manual labour. They would stave off manhood suffrage, ballot, short Parliaments, paid members, equal electoral districts. For the Commons they would retain a property qualification; for the Lords equal legislative rights. Again, Peel did not think this possible. Their Bill would end, he said, in full democracy. He did all he could to stay its coming, but it came. Household suffrage, lodger franchise, ballot came, and property qualifications went. Ministers proposed short Parliaments, paid members, and abolition, or mutilation, of the Second Chamber. And now the party cry 'One man, one vote,' and the counter-cry 'One vote, one value,' smack strongly of manhood suffrage and equal electoral districts.

Peel did not love disestablishment, or democracy. But he foresaw them.

As regards the Corn Laws, his position was different from that of Villiers or of Cobden. He had in charge the welfare of the whole nation. He had the authority of Adam Smith for dealing gently with existing interests by gradual change to a sounder system. He had also to reckon with his party. He was educating them, faster than they liked, for full Free Trade. He was about to recommend that policy to them for the next General Election, when all at once potatoes failed. What that meant, Peel

and Graham were the first to see. They could not make some of their colleagues see, and rather than maintain the tax on corn in famine they resigned.

In 1841 Cobden had informed large public meetings that Peel could, when he chose, repeal the Corn Laws. In 1845 Peel chose to repeal them, but could not; nor would Russell attempt it, with Peel's promised aid.

Then at last, under the double incentive of a personal appeal from the Queen and of famine (though invisible to many) staring him in the face, Peel nerved himself for desperate action, and was once more,

when the waves ran high,
A daring pilot in extremity.

Abandoning Whig and Tory laggards, he re-enlisted first Wellington, and all his old Cabinet save Stanley, and by prodigious personal efforts, combined with his unrivalled skill in handling Legislative Assemblies, he freed the people's bread for ever from unjust taxation.

A statesman's foresight is best proved in action. Let that test be applied to Peel's well-known Reforms. On his Currency and Bank Acts, his Police, his Church Commission, on his later Irish policy—Bequests Act, Maynooth Act, Academical Institutions Act, Devon Commission, preferential patronage of Roman Catholics, &c.—on his Income Tax, and on his Free Trade Tariffs, he staked high. On many of these he was pertinaciously opposed—on Income Tax by Russell and Cobden, on Sugar duties by Sandon and Ashley, on Corn Laws by Stanley and Disraeli. On Maynooth, Gladstone resigned. Peel carried all these measures. Which of them have failed?

One year before the French Revolution of 1830 he passed the Roman Catholic Relief Bill. One year before the worst of the Irish Famine, and eighteen months before

the European revolutions of 1848—‘by a lucky accident, of course’—he repealed the Corn Laws.

In 1846 his Bill for protecting life in Ireland was thrown out, and he resigned. But what followed? The Whigs who helped to throw it out, and so became responsible for governing Ireland, applied for similar powers, and with his help obtained them.

So much in mitigation of the charge that Peel had little foresight. It is more true that what he did foresee he kept to himself and a few friends sometimes perhaps too long. Resolved, in a half-democratic age, to govern not as others but as he thought best, he had often a difficult course to steer. He kept the helm in his own hand, and twice by suddenly putting the ship about he saved the State, but not his party. For that they did not love him.

Some other faults, if closely examined, tend to disappear. Peel’s grandson, in his able summary (Vol. III.), admits that ‘for a British statesman, he was too bold.’ Others have said, too cautious. The contradiction may be explained. In arduous questions his habit was to wait in silence until the facts were all before him, then to choose his course. He took counsel mainly with himself. For examples see his answer in December 1834 to King William, and in December 1845 to the Queen. In either case the task proposed was formidable. To each, without consulting others, he answered, ‘I will be your Minister.’ To the Queen he added, ‘though I stand alone.’

‘To everything there is a season’—a time for caution, and a time for daring. No statesman knew that better than Peel.

‘It was peculiar to him that, in great things as in small, all the difficulties first occurred to him; that he would anxiously consider them, pause, and warn against rash resolutions; but having convinced himself after a long and

careful investigation not only that a step was right to be taken, but of the practical mode also of safely taking it, it became a necessity and a duty to him to take it. All his caution and apparent timidity changed into courage and power of action, and at the same time readiness cheerfully to make any personal sacrifice which its execution might rightly demand.'

The words are those of one who knew Peel well, and often sought his aid.³

If these were weak points, Peel had many strong. His command of principles and facts, his powers of argument and judgment, his promptitude, and patience, tact, and firmness, his command of temper (though Mr. Gladstone sometimes found him 'peppery'), his fine sense of personal and of national honour, his admiration of 'handsome' and contempt for 'shabby' conduct, his regard for truth, his public spirit, his generosity in gifts, his delicacy in conferring favours, his respect for conscientious difference of opinion, his delight in the society of men eminent in science or literature, his discriminating patronage of art shine out conspicuous in his letters.

One trait of greatness was his magnanimous silence as regards opponents. 'In Peel's letters to Mr. Croker' (says the editor of them) 'there is not a single allusion to Mr. Disraeli.' Nor is there in his other letters, except in one reply to Graham. On Canning, Russell, Cobden, Stanley, there is not an unkind word. It was the same in conversation. 'I never,' writes Mr. Cardwell, 'heard him speak unkindly of his persecutors; and when I mentioned this to Lady Peel, her reply was, "Yes, but you cannot know that he would never allow me to do so."''

Attempts have been made to point out in what Peel's chief strength lay. In the opinion of Mr. Disraeli, 'what

³ Martin's *Life of the Prince Consort*, i. 163.

posterity will acknowledge him to have been is the greatest Member of Parliament that ever lived.' Mr. Gladstone, who thought this 'was perhaps meant as rather a left-handed compliment,' remarked once (to the writer), 'Peel was the best man of business who was ever Prime Minister of this country.' And to others he said, 'Taken all round, Peel was the greatest man I ever knew.'⁴

Some say, 'He had not genius.' He had these two notes of it, 'an infinite capacity for taking pains,' and in his work habitual success.

His forte was action. What he took in hand he achieved. Other statesmen of his time—as orators, Grattan and Canning; as philanthropists, Romilly, Mackintosh, and Ashley; as economists, Horner and Jones Loyd; as agitators, O'Connell and Cobden—proposed reforms. Peel gave them final shape. Convincing arguments, humane appeals, shrewd insight, popular demands—if just and feasible—his skill translated into laws that still endure.

A brief word in conclusion. To one whose duty it has been to read more of Peel's private letters than can ever be published, it may be allowed—and it seems but fair—to record the strong impression left by them as a whole; that Sir Robert Peel was more than a consummate man of business, more than a 'greatest Member of Parliament,' more than a great statesman, he was a great and a good man.

If the evidence here produced should serve to show him as he really was, not flattered, not misunderstood, not dimly seen through passing clouds of ancient prejudice or gathering mists of time, but as he thought, felt, wrote, and acted in the living present, fifty or eighty years ago, the labour spent upon these volumes will not have been thrown away.

CHARLES STUART PARKER.

Jan. 1, 1899.

⁴ *Mr. Gladstone*, by Sir Edward Hamilton.

In addition to his Codicil published in the Memoirs, Sir Robert Peel left the two following testamentary papers of public interest.

To be placed with my Will.

I desire that I may be interred in the vault in the Parish Church of Drayton Bassett in which my father and mother are interred, and that my funeral may be without ostentation or parade of any kind.

I earnestly hope and entreat that no member of my family will apply for, or will accept if offered, any title distinction or reward on account of service I may have rendered in Parliament or in office.

If my sons entitle themselves to honorary distinction or reward by their own exertions, they will probably, if they are desirous of it, receive such acknowledgment as may be due to their own personal merits; but it is my express desire that no title or mark of honour be sought for or accepted on account of high stations held or acts done by me.

ROBERT PEEL.

May 8, 1844.

Memorandum.

These are the whole of my confidential papers. I have not withdrawn a single document of any kind.

The letters addressed to me and written by me were written frequently on the spur of the moment, for the pressure of official business rarely leaves sufficient time for the mature consideration of the various important matters on which a decision must be taken. It leaves none for the choice of words and careful construction of sentences. I think I can safely say that there is not a single letter which was written with a view to subsequent publication.

The confidential correspondence during the two periods for which I was head of the Government, taken in conjunction with the proceedings in Parliament, contains probably the best history of the domestic political events of the time which they embrace. In my correspondence with Lord Aberdeen will be found much interesting matter as to foreign affairs.

When I was absent from London, the communication with those of my colleagues who held the principal offices of Government was very frequent and was necessarily in writing. It was still more frequent when I was in London, but our intercourse was a personal one, and of this of course the traces are much less perfect. They hardly exist indeed, for I had no leisure to keep any memorandum of what passed.

The extent of their confidence in me, and the degree of control which I personally exercised over the general course of the Government, may, however, be inferred from the record of my written correspondence during my occasional separation from my colleagues.

ROBERT PEEL.

Jan. 23, 1847.

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SIR ROBERT PEELE

CHAPTER I.

1827.

Canning's natural Successor, Peel—The King prefers Goderich and the Whigs—Wellington resumes Command of the Army—Fears of losing him from the Tory Party—The King makes Herries Finance Minister—The Whigs threaten to go, but stay—Peel's View of the Position—Peel and Huskisson.

ON Canning's death, his natural successor in public life, as Lord Liverpool and as Canning himself foresaw, was Peel.

Between their followers there was much ill will, between themselves none. For five years they had served amicably as colleagues. Within the Cabinet, when opinions differed, Peel had supported the liberal policy in trade of Huskisson, in foreign affairs of Canning. Both were averse from democratic change. On one great question they had differed—of the Roman Catholic claims Canning was the chief advocate, Peel the chief opponent—on all else they had agreed.

When at last they parted, this came out so clearly that Peel's wariest counsellor begged him not to show their correspondence. 'The sentence,' wrote Bishop Lloyd, 'of which I am most afraid is that which, both in Canning's letter and in yours, asserts an entire union on all public questions except one.'

On that one question the King was with Peel. Against concession to Catholics he had offered his personal guarantee. But such a pledge Peel had deemed unconstitutional, and incompatible with the honourable obligation of Canning as Prime Minister to deal with claims which he had long declared to be

urgent. On this ground alone Peel had refused to serve under Canning. But the refusal had led to further separation. Canning was driven to ally himself with Whigs, Peel was left with Ultra-Tories.

The joint withdrawal of Peel and Wellington had been resented by the King as 'dictation.' He was vexed, too, by Peel's having refused to trust him. Both his late Ministers were out of favour. But now, could Canning's Government go on without Canning, or must the King reluctantly fall back on Wellington and Peel?

Wellington had resigned the command of the army, and had refused to come back 'till Canning should make reparation for his offensive letter.'

On Canning's death the Duke inclined to resume command, causing much anxiety to his chief confidant, who sought to keep him in touch with Peel, in the interests of the Tory party.

With that object, on August 7, the eve of Canning's death, Mr. Arbuthnot begins a correspondence. Peel replies.

To Mr. Charles Arbuthnot.

Whitehall: Aug. 8, 1827.

You will of course have heard, before this can reach you, that Canning died this morning at four o'clock.

I saw Lord Douglas yesterday about three. He then spoke of a very slight improvement, and seemed to think that there was a ray of hope.

One forgets all differences and dissensions now.

I am very sorry that I am in town. We have just resolved on taking Shelley's place, Maresfield, and shall go there as soon as we possibly can. The Duke, very properly in my opinion, left town yesterday for Strathfieldsaye. I think you determine wisely in not coming to town at the present moment.

The odious fellow who writes in the 'Times' talks of the vultures hovering round poor Canning's remains, and insinuates that we had all come up for the purpose of being at hand in the event of his death!

I have heard nothing from which I can form a guess as to what the King will do, and I shall take care not to make

inquiry. I met Sir Herbert Taylor in Downing Street yesterday, and walked with him some time. His impression was that the King would very likely send for the Duke of Wellington, to talk with him, in the first instance.

Letters follow daily, setting forth the apprehensions of the old Tories.

From Mr. Arbuthnot.

Aug. 9, 1827.

My dread is lest the King should try to patch up a Government from the present materials, and should at the same time call upon the Duke to resume his command.

If the Duke had never thrown it up, he ought upon his avowed principles to retain it, with a Whig Government. But I should be very sorry to see him again at the head of the army until his own friends are again in power.

I feel sure that the King will like to keep us all out, if he knows how. He used his old Government ill by the way in which he made his choice of Canning; and having reason to be angry with himself, he will not readily forgive those who refused submission to his will.

August 10.—From two persons I heard that Lord Goderich had received the King's commands to form a Government. If he should be so commanded, he will probably endeavour to gain over some of those who seceded. I should be sorry to see Lord Lansdowne, Tierney &c. confirmed in the Government by additions of strength from our party. But we must take care to carry the feeling of the country along with us, and we ought to bear in mind that our great Tory and aristocratical support was caused by the dislike and dread of Canning. We must also, for our own policy's sake, be most careful to treat the King with the utmost deference and respect.

From Sir Henry Hardinge.

(*Private.*)

Aug. 11, 1827.

I hear Lord Goderich has actually accepted the office of First Lord of the Treasury, and that a warrant is now

making out to secure his retirement of 3,000*l.* a year. This looks prophetic of short tenure.

They are proceeding to fill up the vacant offices from their own interior. No application will be made to recruit from individuals of the ex-Tories or Whigs at present.

Lord Lyndhurst has been again sent for by the King, and is, I hear, in communication with him, having given his advice that the only means of forming an efficient Government would be to call upon the Duke and you.

That the whole of the present miserable arrangement is too weak to last, is, I think, self-evident, and I cannot but imagine the King, for his own personal dignity, wishes to go through the form of not too suddenly turning out those whom he appointed only three months ago, and that, having so freshly stigmatised the seceders as deserters and conspirators, he is a little awkward in flying to them for refuge at the very first moment of need.

I conceive from what I hear that Lord Lyndhurst will take the initiative by resigning, so soon as he can ascertain that the old Chancellor [Eldon] would be satisfied with the Presidency of the Council.

The Whigs are very low. Brougham is said to be in town incognito. The whole concern is so farcical, that I am satisfied neither the King's peevishness nor Robinson's [Goderich's] tears can force the machine into active motion.

From Mr. Arbuthnot.

Aug. 12, 1827.

I must give vent to the rage with which I am boiling over.

The King pretended great misery at not being reconciled to the Duke. The Lady did the same, and Knighton went further, and said it was absolutely necessary to have the Duke to fly to in case of need. This case of need suddenly arrives. They think not of sending to him. They prove that all they wanted was to inveigle and cajole him back to the army, for the exclusive purpose of giving strength to Canning.

They will, I doubt not, seek him again for the army, when they have patched up their tattered work, and when they may hope to shield themselves behind his great name. But I shall die of despair if he allows himself to be so mis-used.

There is a cry from both Whigs and Tories that he ought to be sent for. But Lord Goderich, who was blubbering at his separation from us, has the presumption to attempt the propping up of a Government which shook to its very centre even when wielded by far mightier hands than his.

The truth is, the King in his heart hates the Duke, and he hates you, and like most kings he will try to surround himself with men of no name or power, because with such men he may do whatever he pleases.

On the same day the Duke himself writes bluntly of the King and of Canning.

Strathfieldsaye: Aug. 12, 1827.

The King's conduct to Lord Lansdowne was quite consistent with what he said to me of the Whigs. But it does not follow that he will not keep them in his service, or even add to the number, if it should suit his purpose of gratifying his displeasure against those who would not submit to be tricked by his Majesty and Mr. Canning last April. When I saw him, I thought this displeasure as strong as ever it had been, although expressed in moderate terms.

I besides think that there are no two men in England whom his Majesty would not prefer to have about him to those two whom the public voice indicates, namely yourself and me.

From Mr. Arbuthnot.

Aug. 15, 1827.

Lord Lyndhurst certainly told the King that he ought to send for the Duke, and that you and the Duke could alone form a strong Government for him. But his Majesty detests his former servants, and though he will try to turn the Duke to his own purposes, he is not in fact fonder of him than he is of you.

Their hope now is that they shall get the Duke back to the army. Indeed, it is upon this that they rely, and their language I find is that the Duke cannot refuse.

What he will do I cannot tell. I hear from him daily, and I am sure he is disgusted and indignant. He thinks it most fortunate that they did not offer to negotiate with us, and there is not a word in his letters which does not evince a great anxiety for our party.

Aug. 16.—The Duke of Rutland writes in dread lest the Duke should take the army. His feeling is that every effort should be made to destroy the remnant of Canning's Administration, and he expresses the most earnest hope that the Duke will not lend them his great name.

Aug. 17.—I should imagine that much hope is entertained in London of gaining over, one by one, several of our party, and of thus breaking us down, it being felt that we were kept together by deep-rooted enmity to Canning. For my part I am, if possible, more hostile to Lord Goderich than I was to his predecessor. Canning had great powers and talents, which one could not but respect.

All my thoughts and anxieties are directed to the Duke. I am aware that he will be placed in a great difficulty if the army is offered to him, but I shall be in perfect despair if he accepts.

The same day the Duke writes :

Kingston Hall : Aug. 17, 1827.

My dear Peel,—Lord Anglesey came here this morning with the inclosed letters from his Majesty and Lord Goderich. I confess that I had not expected that this step would be taken. Indeed, I believed that it would not. However, upon the perusal of these letters, it was quite clear to me that I could not decline to accept this offer without putting an extinguisher upon myself as an officer of the army. I therefore wrote the inclosed answers.

I thought it better to state to Lord Goderich than to the King the nature of the political relation in which I should stand to the Government.

Ever yours most sincerely,
WELLINGTON.

The King to the Duke of Wellington.

My dear Friend,—I write for the purpose of again offering to you the command of my army, and I sincerely hope that the time is arrived when the country will no longer be deprived of the benefit of your high talents.

Always with great truth,
Your sincere Friend,
G. R.

Lord Goderich to the Duke of Wellington.

From the bottom of my heart I hope you will accept the King's offer, and I am sure you will do me the justice to believe that my anxiety that you should do so does not arise from anything which may be personal to myself, but from my entire conviction that your return to the command of the army is of the last importance to the best interests of our common country, which can in no circumstances forget what she owes to your long and distinguished services.

The Duke of Wellington to Lord Goderich.

I have received your letter from Lord Anglesey.

I have never thought that political differences of opinion ought to prevent me from commanding his Majesty's army at the Horse Guards equally as an army in the field; and I have written to his Majesty that I accept his most gracious offer of the command of his army, &c.

In Mr. Peel's opinion the Duke had no option but to take the command, on the ground, always so strong with him, of public duty.

Mr. Peel to the Duke of Wellington.

Maresfield Park : Aug. 19, 1827.

I this morning received your letter of the 17th with copies of those of his Majesty and Lord Goderich. I thank you for sending them to me.

I am bound to say that I do not think you could, either consistently with your former professions, with your duty to the country, or with due regard to what you owe to the military service, reject the offer which was made to you by the King.

Lord Bathurst to Mr. Peel.

Apsley : Aug. 19, 1827.

The Duke of Wellington came here yesterday. He was waked at half-past seven o'clock on the Friday morning at Mr. Bankes' by Lord Anglesey coming into his room, telling him that he was the bearer of a letter from the King, as well as one from Lord Goderich. The Duke on receiving the letters desired Lord Anglesey to have the goodness to ring the bell for his servant, as he would get up immediately. And so ended the first conference.

[An account follows of the letters, and the Duke's answers, as above.]

On Lord Anglesey coming again into his room he gave him the two letters, but did not enter into the subject of the letters, or even intimate what were the contents.

Lord Anglesey then said that he would communicate to him what were the arrangements of the new Government. The Duke said that he had no desire to be informed of them. Lord Anglesey replied that, as a matter of curiosity at least, the Duke would surely like to hear, and then told him &c.

I imagine that Lord Anglesey must have felt his reception not very cordial, or at least the communication with him not to have been very much so, for on taking his leave immediately after, to go to London with the letters, he said, ' Well, you will at least say I am a good courier.'

Mr. Peel to Mr. Arbuthnot.

Maresfield: Aug. 17, 1827.

I have long foreseen that the Catholic question must place me in the position in which I am at present. If Lord Liverpool had lived, the great probability is that he and I would have been out of office at this time.

I do not at all regret that the King did not send for me after Canning's death. Still less do I regret that I have received no communication from Lord Goderich.

It would not have been an easy matter for the Duke of Wellington and for me to form under existing circumstances a strong Government in the House of Commons.

I should think it not improbable that the King had made my exclusion from office a *sine qua non*, on the appointment of Goderich.

It is very natural in a man, and particularly when that man is a king, to hate another who declines to trust him.

Aug. 19.—To-day's post brought me your letter, and one from the Duke, inclosing copies of letters from the King and Lord Goderich, and notifying his acceptance of the command of the army.

I think it would not be fair towards the Duke to take into account the effect which the acceptance may have on the state of parties and the politics of the day.

I cannot very clearly foresee the issue of the present state of things. The accession of the Duke of Wellington will, no doubt, give material strength to the Government, because they will get his opinion on every question with which military matters are concerned, and because his opinion is worth more than that of all the present Cabinet, and will be most thankfully acquiesced in, I have no doubt, by every individual member of it.

I dare say the King made my exclusion a *sine qua non*. If he did, it gives me no mortification, nor will it at all influence my politics.

Mr. Arbuthnot, on hearing of the Duke's acceptance, writes with sore misgivings :

Aug. 19, 1827.

I should have been rejoiced if the Duke had felt himself at liberty to refuse. He had placed himself at the head of the great Tory party in the House of Lords, and in a way that had no connection whatever with his military character. I trust the result for him will not be that he will be taken from his friends and taken to by his enemies. Should this unfortunately happen, his private happiness will be interfered with, and all those in the House of Lords who revered his great name, and had thereby been led into additional excitement on his account, will be disappointed and displeased.

I think there is a great deal of truth in all that you say in respect to your own position. There would have been great difficulties—though not insurmountable, if the King had been with you—in forming a Government. I trust, however, that I shall live to see you at the head of a Government.

Later on the same day, Mr. Arbuthnot reports that the Duke has arrived to stay with him. He adds a lively account of the troubles of Lord Goderich in forming his Government, especially of the King's determination to make Herries (formerly an officer of the Treasury) Minister of Finance.

Meanwhile the same story had been communicated from another quarter on the best authority.

From Sir Alexander Grant.

Whitehall Gardens : Aug. 18, 1827.

Herries has shown me everything.

It seems that the situation has been more than once proposed to him, but that he declined accepting it on the score of his health, which has really suffered most severely since the prorogation. However, on Thursday he received an autograph from the King, sent open through Lord Goderich, in which he desires to see him at Windsor on the

following day, and adds that, 'feeling every confidence that a few weeks' leisure would restore his health, he cannot dispense with his services as Chancellor of the Exchequer.' Of course no alternative remained, and Lord Goderich received his acquiescence.

To Windsor he repaired for the purpose of receiving the seals accordingly. There Lord Goderich had an interview with him, said the King would offer the seals, but, weeping, implored him to refuse them for the present, as his acceptance would embarrass the Government. Herries was thunderstruck, but yielded. He did by the King as desired, who instantly cried, 'I see through this. It is a Whig trick. They dislike you because you are a Protestant and a Tory, as I am. I will make Lord Bexley [Vansittart] First Lord of the Treasury, and you *shall* be Chancellor of the Exchequer.'

Herries remonstrated, and the King then called in Sir W. Knighton, and said before him, 'Well, remember the seals are yours, my delivering them is only postponed.' He was then simply sworn in as a Privy Councillor.

On his return to London, Herries addressed a letter to Lord Goderich, referring to the fact of the King's letter delivered by him, and the subsequent occurrences, and desiring to know (but disclaiming all request to have the situation) what Lord Goderich's intentions with regard to him were. Lord Goderich replied this morning, 'I have received your note, which is all that I can say at present.'

The fact is, that it was intimated to Lord Goderich that if Herries received the seals the Whigs would resign office, and I fear he prefers them to the Tories.

We live in strange times, and among strange people.

From Mr. Arbuthnot.

Woodford : Aug. 19, 1827.

The Duke showed us a letter he got this morning from Holmes. I dare say you know the whole story. Upon his arrival at Windsor, Herries found Lord Goderich, and

they were soon joined by Lord Lansdowne and Tierney. These two took Lord Goderich aside, and after ten minutes' talk with them he called Herries out of the room, burst into floods of tears, and almost upon his knees implored him to decline office. The King then saw Lord Goderich, and afterwards Herries, to whom he said that the seals were his if he chose to take them, and at all events he should not return without being a Privy Councillor; and he was sworn in. The King was most violent in his abuse of the Whigs.

Thus it stands, but I dare say you know all this already. All I trust and hope is that if the Government should break to pieces you will not take office except as Premier.

Aug. 22.—It is so much the interest of them all to keep together, that the schism may not occur so soon as expected, but Lord Goderich has not the presence of mind, or the command from influence, or any of the requisites (except popular manners) to keep discordant elements together. The Whigs have defeated him once, and this will not render them more forbearing.

I fear that it will have been from us [Mr. and Mrs. Arbuthnot], when he came the other day to Woodford, that the Duke met with the least cordial congratulations which as yet he has received. It is not that I object to his resuming the command. But circumstances, and circumstances of the Duke's own seeking, had so united him with the great aristocracy in the House of Lords, that he ought, I think, in his reply to Lord Goderich, to have made it distinctly understood that he could give no support to the Government, and that he must reserve to himself the liberty to oppose it when he found it necessary. This is the view which I take of the subject.

The Duke is evidently much pleased with your reply to his notification of his having accepted.

I dare say the King will try his utmost to avoid recurring ever again to you; but if you were with him to-morrow, you might be his greatest favourite on the day following.

It would not at all surprise me to hear of his proposing

to Herries to form a Government. One never should have thought of Lord Bexley forming one. Even so long ago as Perceval's death he desired me to name a Government to him, and told me he would adopt it at once.

Mr. Arbuthnot was then Patronage Secretary to the Treasury. He had entered Parliament in 1795, when Peel was a child.

All parties to the dispute agreed to await Huskisson's return from abroad before deciding whether Herries was to be Chancellor of the Exchequer or not.

Mr. Holmes to Mr. Arbuthnot.

Aug. 22, 1827.

Shortly after the King's arrival, he sent for Lord Goderich, Lord Lyndhurst, Lord Carlisle, and in a very calm but determined manner said that he was anxious to state to them that he deeply lamented his having consented to any postponement of Mr. Herries' appointment; and turning to Lord Carlisle said, 'I am anxious that you should communicate to your friends that under no circumstances shall I alter this determination, unless I shall be driven by the dissolution of the present Government to form another. But, as I have consented to wait till Lord Goderich hears from Mr. Huskisson, I shall do so.'

Sir Alex. Grant to Mr. Peel.

Whitehall Gardens : Aug. 22, 1827.

The Chancellor [Lyndhurst] was at Windsor on Sunday by command. He is most eminently anti-Whig, and with reason, for he is quite aware of their wish and endeavour to remove him for the purpose of making room for Scarlett.

Their Whigships look wondrous solemn and black.

While his friend Goderich was thus tossed upon the troubled waters, Peel, safe on land, found it, in his old Oxford phrase, 'a source of gratification' to see what evils he had escaped when he declined to embark with Canning.

To the Bishop of Oxford.

Aug. 21, 1827.

All that is passing in the political world is viewed by me, so far as I am personally concerned, with great complacency.

Could I have foreseen all that has happened, I should have acted as I did act. I should have refused to serve under Canning in the particular office which I held, and should have deemed it unworthy of me to evade the difficulty by accepting another.

I have a very strong conviction, unshaken by intervening events, that long before Canning's death I should have had to make my choice between subserviency to him and his Whig confederates, and decided resistance. Resistance could be nothing but retirement from office, after having shown an appetency for it, and perhaps after having been tempted to make some concessions rather than come to open rupture.

You are aware that I know that the Whigs—at least that Brougham—told Canning that he might retain me in office, and still have their support.

What must have been my position, such a support being tendered personally to Canning? His alliance would have been, covertly at least, with the Whigs, not with me.

I have long foreseen that the Catholic question under any circumstances would probably place me in the position in which I am—the position which I fully resolved to assign to myself, had that occurred which I expected to occur—namely, that I had been in a minority of thirty, perhaps twenty, on the last Catholic debate in the Commons.

What is to become of such questions as Reform, Catholic question, Repeal of Corporation and Test Acts, I know not. The King cannot well give way, but nothing can be more unsatisfactory than resistance to the Catholic question founded merely on the will or scruples of the King.

The Bishop, with less equal mind, agreeing on the whole with Peel, yet hints a doubt whether, by carrying his colleagues

with him, he might not have enabled Canning to do without the Whigs. And then, falling furiously on both, he unpacks his soul in bitter words that spare neither the living nor the dead.

From the Bishop of Oxford.

Cuddesdon : Aug. 24, 1827.

I wish I could bring myself to look on the scenes which are passing around us with the same complacency as you do. But I cannot do so. Whenever I look backwards or forwards my spirits are inclined to sink.

You have now for so many years occupied so great a portion of my feelings, that I cannot bring myself to look with apathy on the position in which you are now placed.

I had long foreseen that the time would come when the Catholic question would throw you out, and I was well aware that you had foreseen it too. It required no great spirit of prophecy to predict the former, and very little observation to discover the latter point. It was clear that every year was thinning the intellectual influence of the Protestant ranks, and that the time was rapidly approaching when you would be left alone. And I knew full well that you had made your determination. All your anxiety about myself, your fixed resolve that I should lose no time in getting upon the Bench, showed me clearly enough that you were ready to bring your political career to a close, for a time at least, at any given moment. So that the change was not unexpected by me.

I agree with you, too, entirely in thinking that it is more than probable that, if you had remained in with Canning, something would have occurred, even in the short period of his administration, that would have driven you to retire. Retirement, or subserviency to the Whigs, would in all probability, as you observe truly, have been your only choice.

But this argument rests for its force on the circumstance of the accession of the Whigs, and the question which I sometimes argue with myself is this—whether the Catholic

question did in fact impose on you this necessity in the first instance of retiring ?

You were indeed left alone in the House of Commons, but, as the question was no longer a Cabinet question, how were you more dependent in the Cabinet than out of it ? You had had to fight the battle over and over again, *usque ad nauseam*, but you will have to fight it still, and as it seems to me with much greater disadvantage, than if you had remained in office. If all the rest had remained in, I thought it would have been better that you should have remained in also ; but I would not on any account have had you in while all the rest were out, because in that case you would necessarily have been mixed up with the Whigs, and must have lost character, as all the rest have done.

Yet still your going out would have been not only the most honest but the wisest course also, had it not been for the villanous expedient of Canning and the Whigs, of risking all on the King's conscience.

It wanted no eagle's eye to see long before what Canning was at, in his speech two years ago, when he said he had kept silence on the Catholic question on the ground of George the Third's known aversion to the Emancipation, and that he had only declared himself after the King's declared incompetency to reign. I saw clearly enough that this was a regular plan upon which he might ride off at any time. But as for calling this argument unsatisfactory, I cannot mince terms so delicately. It is as disgraceful profligacy in politics as I have ever known or read of.

There can be nothing more evident than that Canning and Lord Lansdowne and the whole set were bound by every principle, both as public men and gentlemen, to urge the question onwards. And how, and how only, do they save themselves from the attacks they deserve ? Merely by the knowledge that the Protestants cannot in conscience press them to bring on the question. But to take advantage of this knowledge is nothing but rank villany, and the most hideous treachery to the cause which they pretended to hold so dear.

I should like very much to have a few days' talk with you, and if I can I will.

Peel answers quietly :

Maresfield : Aug. 26, 1827.

You and Mrs. Lloyd (for we earnestly hope that she will accompany you) may set out as soon as ever you please. If birds of the air were made for bishops as well as other men, bring your gun with you.

There is one material circumstance which you omit in your letter, the particular office which I held, the particular relation in which I stood to the Prime Minister.

It was not mere difference on the Catholic question, it was the degree of the difference. Could I with propriety remain charged with the domestic government of the country, I and the Prime Minister being the two men in England most deeply committed on the opposite sides of the most important of domestic questions? Supposing that the King had sent for Lord Melville, I do not say that there would have been no difficulty in my retention of office, but it would have been a much less difficulty.

Granted that the Whigs would not have come into office had I remained. But the whole tendency of their operations out of office would have been to embarrass and ultimately to exclude me, and themselves to come in on the Catholic question. In the meantime I am to remain responsible for the administration of Irish affairs, with the whole Whig party, half the Tory party, and the Prime Minister hostile to the principle on which they would have to be administered. The secret support of the King would be very like intrigue on my part against my colleagues. If decided and effectual, which it would not have been, it would inevitably lead to discord.

The proposal of office to me was in effect saying to me, ' Govern Ireland without support, discountenanced by all that is influential in the Government, and when we have discredited you, we will remove you.'

I am confident that I am better where I am and as I am.

Mr. Arbuthnot resumes :

Longshawe : Aug. 24, 1827.

The account of the Duke's visit to Windsor may be given in two words. The King most cordial, but not the name of a public man ever mentioned, politics not even touched upon, not an allusion to Canning. On coming away, the King said, 'Now mind you come here as often as you like, and I shall take the liberty of sending for you when I want to talk with you.' This is literally all.

Aug. 25.—The Duke is convinced that no man ever had such a hold upon the King as Canning had.

It was evident to the Duke that the King had become a perfect despot. Neither Lady Conyngham nor any one seemed to dare to open their lips, and they were all in the greatest terror of him.

The Duke is certain that Canning and all the present men got their hold upon the King by indulging him in all his expenses and his whims. And I should say that Herries has obtained his favour entirely by forwarding the plans at Windsor, at Buckingham House, in St. James's Park, and in other respects, all which, I had long known, had been favourably reported by Knighton.

The consequence of all this is that for the remainder of his life the King will be more difficult than ever to manage.

The Duke received yesterday a letter from Lord Bathurst, repeating his approval of the resumption of the command, but expressing an earnest anxiety that he might not be drawn in to lend his authority to any of their measures.

Lord Bathurst tells him that, had it not been for Lord Goderich's dispute with the Whigs about Herries, the resumption of the command of the army and Canning's death would have put an entire end to the Tories.

To Mr. Arbuthnot.

Maresfield [undated].

The King and the Whigs would either of them give way on such a point as Herries' nomination. After the course

taken by the King with regard to the Protestant Government of Ireland—the positive assurance that he would insist on three Protestants in the situations of Chancellor, Lord Lieutenant, and Secretary; his acquiescence in the appointment of two, probably of three Catholics—the Whigs must know that on the point of principle his Majesty is not very firm. Whenever the King wants to get rid of the Whigs, he will find an opportunity of doing it. Till then they will remain united.

The Duke of Wellington would not resent your difference of opinion from him respecting the command of the army. I have much too high an opinion of him not to believe that he would infinitely prefer the honest expression of sentiments differing from his own to tame acquiescence.

I own to you, had I been in the Duke's situation, with his feelings, although I would have accepted the command, I would have explained the relation in which I intended to stand towards the Government in more distinct and express terms.

The Chin [Sir Alexander Grant] has been staying here three days. He knew nothing that you do not know, though very keen in his inquiries.

From Mr. Arbuthnot.

Sept. 2.—Had the Duke been prepared either to support the Government or to withdraw from politics altogether, I should have lamented his conduct, but I should have understood it.

I was, however, aware that he would be as hostile to the present Government as he had been to Canning's. I was, therefore, amazed that in writing to Lord Goderich he had not distinctly stated what line he should pursue.

In the correspondence which I had with him, he told me that his political position had not been altered, and when I saw him he said to me that the course which he should pursue would be seen on the first day of the Session, meaning thereby that he should go and sit with his old

colleagues. And he also told me that he should oppose the Government whenever he disapproved of its measures, and he particularly referred to the Greek and Portuguese questions.

Such being his intentions, it is, I think, greatly to be regretted that he did not apprise Lord Goderich of them. But, odd as it certainly appears to me, he thinks that in his letter upon accepting the command he was in this respect quite explicit.

I am confident that the King's design has been to nullify him. I know that his Majesty has long been jealous of his power in the country, and that his object has been to lessen it by removing him from politics. No one is more aware than the Duke of the King's real feelings towards him.

We may be sure that it would be only at the last extremity that the King would resort to you and the Duke. He told the Duke of Rutland that he would rather crawl all-fours than employ again his former Ministers.

From Sir Alexander Grant.

Aug. 29, 1827.—The Whigs put their power upon the die, and one and all declare they will admit of no compromise about Herries, that the King's interference in nominating to particular offices is inconsistent with the conducting a Government, and that they are therefore opposed to the principle. They think they are out.

The town, too, thinks they are out. Huskisson has said that 'no man was so fit to be Chancellor of the Exchequer as Herries.' He is supposed to be very Tory.

I feel a thousand per cent. better for your fresh air and kindness.

Old Tierney wrote the article in the 'Times.'

Aug. 30.—Huskisson found the King very firm yesterday. I am told that the King removed that Whig objection to Herries of his being originally his nominee, by saying that when he named Lord Goderich as Premier, *he* [the

King] suggested Sturges Bourne as Chancellor of the Exchequer, and that, on the refusal of the latter, Lord Goderich proposed Herries.

The King afterwards said, 'If I am now resisted, I shall send for the Duke of Wellington and Mr. Peel; as promptly as I did for Lord Goderich and Mr. Sturges Bourne.'

After Huskisson made his report of his audience in Cabinet to-day, it came to a division on the question of acquiescence in Herries' appointment, when the Tory members voted for it, leaving the Whigs in a minority, who thereupon desired time to consult together as to their ulterior proceedings.

They have talked so loud, and adopted so peremptory a tone, asserting that they would rather serve under you than with Herries, that they must debase themselves lower than I can conceive possible if they stick to their offices. At the same time they are blamed by their friends. I hear Lord Brougham has addressed the strongest remonstrances. Calcraft told me to-day that he thought they were mad, that the appointment of Herries was a very proper one. Maberly said as much.

Sydney Smith's joke is, 'From Herrieses and schism, good Lord, deliver us.'

Sept. 1.—I met Huskisson in the street a few minutes since. He took my arm, and himself began a conversation on passing events.

With regard to the most important point—the conduct of the Whig Ministers consequent upon what actually occurred yesterday—he told me that he had been with Lord Lansdowne this morning, previous to the latter's setting out for Windsor. He had stated to him that the King intended to express a hope that the Government would remain as it was, and himself then argued upon the folly of the threatened resignations, denying that there was any case for them.

To this Lord Lansdowne answered that, even conceding so much, he felt that he and his friends were not liked by

the King, and that something would in all probability soon occur that would necessitate a measure which, under these circumstances, it might be as well to take at once.

Huskisson added that he had of course contended against this line of argument, and that he thought he had made some impression. 'Everything, however, will depend upon what actually passes in the Closet. Lansdowne is full of fancies and suspicions, and dry and awkward in his manner, while the King is not a little brusque.'

Huskisson inquired after you. I said you were never better in health and spirits, and, in your own words, apparently caring as little about what was passing in the political world as any gentleman in Sussex. He said, 'That I can fully believe, and a great pity it is!'

The King had his way. Herries took the Exchequer; and the Whigs kept their places.

Mr. Goulburn to Mr. Peel.

Sandleford Priory: Sept. 3, 1827.

I am delighted with the situation of the Whigs, who, having declared their intention of resigning if Herries were appointed, will nevertheless after his appointment retain their offices.

Poor Goderich must lead a pleasant life!

Mr. Peel's letters in reply are not those of an eager politician.

Mr. Peel to Mr. Goulburn.

Drayton Manor: Sept. 16, 1827.

When I passed through town I heard little news. Indeed, I ought to hear little, for parties and political friendships are so dislocated as to have nearly destroyed all my interest in politics.

Sept. 27.—I rather think that the real cause of dissension was not the appointment of Herries, but that the Whigs pretended to have a decided objection to him, and hoped, by

consenting to waive it, to effect the introduction of Lord Holland into the Cabinet.

I am curious to see who will be the new Bishop. Will he be in the interests of the Whigs, the Royal Lodge, or religion?

Copleston [Canning's friend] ought to be the Bishop.

I return the lady's letter. The King sometimes expresses himself in terms of greater wrath with his old Ministers than that letter reports.

I care not what happens. No event could diminish my satisfaction that I was not left responsible for Ireland, Canning being Prime Minister, and having a secret understanding with the Whigs. The certain issue of that state of things must have been resignation, with discomfiture and disgrace.

As the Government of Lord Goderich was evidently about to fall, it became of interest to guess how the Tory friends of Canning were disposed towards their former colleagues. Curiosity coupled with ignorance, as usual, engendered fables. One of these, regarding Canning's chief lieutenant, gave rise to some interesting letters. The packet is endorsed, 'This correspondence took place four months only after the death of Canning.'

Mr. Littleton to Mr. Peel.

Dec. 6, 1827.

I have hesitated a great deal about the propriety of showing you the inclosed letter. But I am so disgusted with the lies daily invented by party spirit that I cannot refrain from availing myself of any means to destroy at least one of them.

Your brother William, who was here last week, referred in conversation to a report that he had heard, that Mr. Huskisson had declared it impossible for him to continue in the Cabinet if you were restored to it, or something exactly to that effect. I knew it to be so impossible he should have expressed himself in terms so much at variance with his undisguised feelings, that I ventured to assure

your brother the report was a malignant fabrication, invented for the purpose of exciting an enmity where none existed naturally, but where it was a party object to create one.

I gave your brother some detailed information, which he must have felt constituted a complete proof of the insidious motive of the fabrication. Fearful I had committed an indiscretion, I thought it right to tell Huskisson what had passed. I enclose you his answer in the strictest confidence, which I beg you will return to me without troubling yourself to make any observation on it.

Mr. Huskisson to Mr. Littleton.

Downing Street: Dec. 4, 1827

Instead of thinking you indiscreet, I have to thank you very sincerely for having so positively contradicted the calumnious report to which Mr. [William] Peel appears to have given credit.

When I confirm in the most unqualified manner your denial of this falsehood, I have said everything that I can be expected or that I feel myself now at liberty to say. The time will come when I shall be free to tell Mr. Peel what my real sentiments have been respecting his return to office, I remaining a part of the Government, and to refer him to the present head of it, if necessary, for the truth of what I may then feel myself not precluded from stating. But this is not the moment for explanation.

There is nothing more painful to me than to be aware of the existence of these odious attempts to disseminate hatred, and to excite personal animosities. For me at least public life has no temptations which can compensate for the growing disgust of it, a disgust which makes me regret, more and more every day, that my wish to retire was overruled when I returned to England three months ago.

Peel's answer shows his high-minded indifference to mere personal talk.

Mr. Peel to Mr. Littleton.

Whitehall : Dec. 9, 1827.

I feel very sensibly the kind motives which induced you to write to me. I return Huskisson's letter, and will consider your communication as made to me in the strictest confidence.

On the day before I received your letter a person connected with the Government mentioned to me that very report which your letter proves to be a false one.

I said that I did not believe it to be true, but that if I were perfectly satisfied that it was true, I never would consider a declaration made at a moment when feelings were warmly excited by the sudden death of an intimate friend and colleague either as indicating personal hostility on the part of another, or justifying it on mine.

I tell you exactly what passed before I got your letter, as a proof that if the report originated, as probably it did, in a malignant desire to excite animosity and resentment, it failed of producing its intended effect upon me, even before it was decisively contradicted.

Mr. Huskisson to Mr. Littleton.

Dec. 15, 1827

I return you Peel's letter. The perusal of it has gratified me more than I can tell you. It is everything that I could expect from good feeling under the guidance of a sound judgment.

Thus with one of Canning's ablest colleagues the way was smoothed for reunion.

CHAPTER II.

1828.

Fall of Lord Goderich's Ministry—The King sends for Wellington—Wellington sends for Peel—Formation of the Duke's Government—Peel's Account to Bishop Lloyd—Family Congratulations—Regrets on parting with Lord Eldon—Hints for moving the Address—Home Office Work—Finance—Foreign Affairs—London Police.

THE Administration of Lord Goderich did not live to meet Parliament. To complete their troubles Huskisson and Herries had fallen out over a proposal to appoint Althorp Chairman of a Finance Committee which had been settled between Goderich and Huskisson without even consulting Herries.

The Duke of Wellington to Mr. Peel.

Jan. 1, 1828.

I understand that the Government is tottering to its foundations. They are all going, for some reason or other. Huskisson will not stay if Herries does. Lord Goderich will go if any one resigns. Many will resign if Lord Holland should be admitted. In the meantime the King will see nobody.

Canning's Cabinet, without Canning, was going to pieces. Who should form the new Government?

One letter given above expresses hopes that Mr. Peel will not take office except as Premier. Another reports the King as saying, 'If I am resisted, I shall send for the Duke of Wellington and Mr. Peel.'

When the King did send, it was for Wellington alone. But that made little difference. Wellington sent for Peel, would see no one till Peel came, and told Peel that 'everything was open, even the headship of the new administration.' Such was the public spirit of both statesmen, and so good the understanding between them, that on all points they promptly agreed.

The Duke of Wellington to Mr. Peel.

London: Jan. 9, 1828.

I enclose a letter which I received from Lord Lyndhurst this morning, in consequence of which having received him shortly after eight o'clock, he told me that the Government being dissolved the King wished to speak to me along with him.

I went to Windsor immediately, and his Majesty told me that he wished me to form a Government, of which I should be the head.

I told his Majesty that I was so situated professionally that I could not say that I would form a Government of which I should be the head, without consulting with others; that I could not say I could form a Government at all without such previous consultation; but that, if he would give me a little time, and leave to go to town to consult with others, I would inquire and see what could be done, and report to him the result.

Now, my dear Peel, I entreat you to come to town, in order that I may consult with you, and have the benefit of your co-operation, in the execution of this interesting commission. You will see that the whole case is before you for discussion.

I have declined to make myself the head of the Government unless upon discussion with my friends it should appear desirable, and excepting Lord Lyndhurst, who, it must be understood, is in office, everything else is open to all mankind, except one person, Lord Grey.

I have sent for nobody else, nor shall I see anybody till you come, which I hope you will early in the morning. I send to your house to desire that a room may be prepared for you, in case you should come this night.

The King said it was to be understood that the Roman Catholic question was not to be made a Cabinet question; that there was to be a Protestant Lord Chancellor, a Protestant Lord Lieutenant, and a Protestant Lord Chancellor in Ireland.

The course taken by Mr. Peel is best described in his own narrative. He writes :

I obeyed, though not without great reluctance, the summons thus received.

I had no desire whatever to resume office, and I foresaw great difficulty in the conduct of public affairs, on account of the state of parties and the position of public men in reference to the state of Ireland and the Catholic question.

It appeared to me on the one hand that the attempt to form a united Government on the principle of resistance to the claims of the Roman Catholics was perfectly hopeless. In the preceding year the measure of concession had been negatived in the House of Commons by a majority of four votes only in a very full House, the numbers being 276 to 272.

On the other hand it was very doubtful whether, after the events which had succeeded the retirement of Lord Liverpool, the schism among the members of his Administration, the adherence of some to Mr. Canning, the separation of others, they could now be reunited in office.

It was with my cordial concurrence that the endeavour to effect this reunion was made. It was so far successful that Mr. Huskisson, Lord Palmerston, and Mr. Charles Grant became members of the Duke of Wellington's Cabinet. Lord Dudley, Mr. William Lamb, and other friends of Mr. Canning who had not been connected with Lord Liverpool's Government, consented also to lend their assistance.

A memorandum written for the Duke explained Mr. Peel's views as to the basis on which the new Government should be formed.

From Mr. Peel's Memorandum, January 1828.

If I am to take office, or called upon for an opinion respecting the formation of a Government, I must, with the utmost pain to myself, disregard many considerations of

private esteem and friendship, which nothing but a sincere and overpowering sense of public duty would induce me to disregard.

I see no alternative but an attempt to reunite the most efficient members of Lord Liverpool's Administration, calling to their aid the abilities of others who are willing cordially to co-operate with them in an Administration of which the Duke of Wellington shall be the head, in the usual station and with the full power of Prime Minister.

The King approved all the appointments proposed to him, but in some cases with reluctance.

Duke of Wellington to Mr. Peel.

Strathfieldsaye : Jan. 13, 1828.

I saw the King on my way down here. His Majesty had at first many objections to the proposed arrangement.

He did not like the removal of Lord Bexley, but he consented to it, and showed a good deal of feeling and emotion on making the sacrifice.

Nor does he like the appointment of Lord Rosslyn. But I think I shall prevail upon him to consent to it.

He does not like the removal of Mr. Herries to the Duchy of Lancaster. Indeed to this he continues to object positively on several grounds, such as the triumph of the other party. But the principal and real objection is that Herries' appointment to the Duchy would confirm the reports and suspicions that he had named him Chancellor of the Exchequer for the purpose of breaking up the last Government, and that he was a *protégé* of his.

He does not like Herries quitting the Exchequer, for the reasons I have stated, but he would not object if Herries were appointed to the Board of Trade. He does not object to Lord Ellenborough.

What do you say to this arrangement:—Herries, President of the Board of Trade; Goulburn, Chancellor of the Exchequer; Lord Ellenborough, Chancellor of the Duchy; the Mint disposable?

He desired that Arbuthnot should have the Woods and Forests.

Mr. Peel's chief confidant at this time, as usual, was Bishop Lloyd. Letters to him show that the question whether the Duke should be Prime Minister was solved by Peel's opinion that this would tend most to bring back former colleagues. By his advice also no attempt was made to form a 'Protestant' or 'ultra-Tory' Administration, and generous offers were made to friends of Canning.

To the Bishop of Oxford.

Whitehall Gardens: Jan. 15, 1828.

Nothing is yet definitely settled. The Duke of Wellington having received a commission from the King to form a Government, sent to me in the first instance, and said, 'Will you consult with me upon this subject?' Observe, I was not included by the King in the commission.

I said to him, 'I am content to act under you. I think it for the advantage of the public service, as tending to reconcile animosities and jealousies, that a new Government should have the advantage of your name at the head of it. I cannot advise the formation of an exclusively Protestant Government, still less the formation of an Ultra Government. My opinion decidedly is, that in the first instance a perfectly sincere and honest attempt should be made to reunite the most efficient members of Lord Liverpool's Cabinet, infusing the additional strength of some persons of the same principles.'

We are doing our utmost to effect this, and are determined not to be deterred by any difficulties that are not insuperable.

Of course Ultras will object to this, and all parties but moderate and reflecting men will be in some degree dissatisfied. Every blockhead is for the complete predominance of his own opinions, and generally with a vehemence proportional to their impracticability.

I have the strongest conviction that the wise and generous part is to leave nothing untried that can unite those who differed, at least who separated, on no other

account than a question about Canning's claim to be Prime Minister.

It is probable, if we succeed in forming a Government, that the Duke will be the head of it, and that I shall return to my former office, with the lead in the House of Commons.

January 17.—Be very incredulous as to what you see asserted in the 'Times' about me. I have not said anything so absurd as that I would not come in without Huskisson. I did express the strongest opinion that—in the present state of our foreign relations, of our domestic position in respect to agriculture, to commerce, and to Ireland, in the present state of the world, and looking to the principles that throughout the world are in conflict—no attempt at an Ultra Government ought to be dreamed of.

I said that I thought a perfectly sincere effort should be made to reunite with those with whom we formerly co-operated, and from whom we separated on no public ground that could prevent our reunion—that terms quite honourable to them should be offered.

But I added, 'If that effort, honestly made, shall fail, if those terms shall be rejected, then I will, if I stand alone in the House of Commons, fight the battle to the last, and never will yield, till it becomes actually impossible to conduct the public business.'

Unfortunately, on account of the state of the Exchequer and of the Mutiny Bill, Parliament could not be dissolved for some weeks. Otherwise—But I hope that all will be satisfactorily arranged without looking to such an alternative.

You may say at Oxford that my line is moderation, readiness to make great sacrifices in order to promote the union of former confederates, but a firm determination, if this feeling is not met by a corresponding one, to face every difficulty rather than abandon the post, of course presuming that the King's full authority is given for its defence.

Ever most affectionately yours,

R. P.

Monday Morning, January 21, 1828.—The definitive arrangement was not made till twelve o'clock last night. The list of the 'Morning Chronicle' of Saturday is a correct one, except that it is not true that it is settled that the Duke shall retain the army, nor is it settled that the Master-General of the Ordnance shall be out of the Cabinet.¹ Lord Palmerston is Secretary at War.

Having acted throughout the whole of the difficulties of the last ten days from an honest conviction that the course which I was taking was the best, I feel quite at ease, and so far as I am personally concerned, indifferent about results.

I will write as you suggest. God bless you.

Ever affectionately yours,

ROBERT PEEL.

To his former Under Secretary in Ireland, Mr. Gregory, Mr. Peel remarks (see Memoir) :—

I care not for the dissatisfaction of Ultra-Tories. This country ought not to be, and cannot be, governed upon any other principles than those of firmness no doubt, but of firmness combined with moderation.

My last week has been spent in unceasing efforts to promote the reunion of the old party. Some sacrifices, not of principle, but of personal feeling towards individuals, are unavoidable. God knows they are most painful.

With Lord Wellesley, on his giving up the Lord-Lieutenancy, were exchanged letters conveying warm assurances of mutual esteem. To Lord Eldon, in his seventy-seventh year left out of the new Government, Peel writes in soothing terms.

(*Private.*)

Whitehall Gardens: Jan. 26, 1828.

It was not until this day that my appointment to the office of Home Secretary of State was completed by my taking the oaths in Council.

¹ The Duke resigned the Command-in-Chief, and Sir George Murray was placed in the Cabinet.

My first act is to express to you my deep regret that any circumstances should have occurred carrying with them the remotest appearance of a separation from you in public life. All the impressions of affectionate regard and esteem for you derived from long and unreserved intercourse are much too deeply engraven on my mind to be ever effaced or weakened.

I am grateful to you for the uniform kindness I have experienced from you from my first entrance into public life, proud of having possessed your confidence, and most anxious to retain, without reference to politics, your personal good will and esteem.

My return to public life has been no source of gratification to me. In common with the Duke of Wellington, hitherto at least, I have had nothing to contemplate but painful sacrifices, so far as private feelings are concerned.

I hope to call upon you very soon. It shall be the first visit I pay.

In Ireland the duties of Lord Lieutenant were undertaken by Lord Anglesey; those of Chief Secretary remained with Mr. Lamb, afterwards Lord Melbourne.

At Drayton tidings of the arrangements completed were received with warm approval. Sir Robert Peel—like Lord Eldon, in his seventy-seventh year—hails his son as 'the Minister' not of the King, but 'of the people,' and desires to know that his delight in news so pleasing is shared by his grandchildren.

Sir Robert Peel to Mr. Peel.

Drayton: Jan. 23, 1828.

My dear Robert,—Your long silence assured me, that in forming a new Government many difficulties would occur, and due consideration having been paid to talent, family connections, and the circumstances of the Empire, there is reason to believe that the new Government will give general satisfaction.

When splendid abilities and integrity are separately

considered, some partial friends may consider their worth not to have been duly appreciated. But considering the importance of blending together in one mixed Government distinctions in society arising from different sources, I am inclined to believe that the arrangement is calculated to be durable and successful. People in this part of the country are delighted to find that you have again placed yourself in a situation to serve the country.

Yours affectionately,

ROBERT PEEL.

Sir Robert Peel to Mrs. Peel.

Dearest Julia,—Thank you for your letter, rendered the more acceptable as it is of a piece with the feelings of the country.

Your husband may have the approbation of the King, but he is the Minister of the people, a choice which does them infinite honour.

Are the children made sensible of our good fortune? Kiss them for their grandpapa.

Yours affectionately,

ROBERT PEEL.

Parliament met on January 29. A letter (found among Lord Liverpool's papers) to Mr. Cecil Jenkinson, with hints for moving the Address, is remarkable for avoidance of almost every topic but one—foreign affairs.

Mr. Peel advises 'no reference to the dissolution of the late Government, the squabbles of the late Ministry, or the formation of the present, except that it is constructed on the principles of the Government of Lord Liverpool'—his correspondent's father.

The continuance of the contest between Turkey and Greece, with 'shocking excesses on each side,' should be treated as 'no longer tolerable—an exception, endangering the peace of Europe.' As regards Navarino, 'everyone must lament the effusion of blood, and that we were placed by circumstances in hostile collision with Turkey—an ancient ally. Express belief that notwithstanding the battle, reconciliation is possible.'

The sole domestic subject mentioned is 'inquiry into collection and expenditure of public revenue—no cause for despondency as to public resources.'

At the Home Office, Mr. Peel had no longer the help of his former Under Secretary of State. How highly he had valued that assistance appears from letters exchanged on the retirement of Mr. Hobhouse in the previous year. Mr. Peel on that occasion condemned the scanty recognition of merit in the permanent Civil Service. To his mind there was 'nothing worse in our administration.' Yet two generations were to pass before a new departure was marked by the promotion to the Upper House of such eminent civil servants as Lord Cottesloe, Lord Hammond, Lord Blachford, Lord Hobhouse, Lord Lingen, Lord Sandford, Lord Thring, Lord Playfair, Lord Farrer, and Lord Welby.

From Rt. Hon. Henry Hobhouse.

Whitehall: July 4, 1827.

I find my position much deteriorated since you quitted this office.

Instead of meeting with any incentive to make my labours palatable, every recent occurrence has been of a discouraging nature. It is irksome to remodel my habits so often to suit those of a new master. And if under Sturges Bourne, whom I have known and respected for twenty-seven years, I feel the loss of a large portion of that confidence by which you sweetened my toils, what am I to expect from the total loss of it under Lord Lansdowne, with whom I have no acquaintance, and probably very little community of principle?

I am sorry to find my name in your speech on the Small Debts Bill. The little I have had to do with it was not worth mentioning.

To Mr. Hobhouse.

July 5, 1827.

I deeply regret on public grounds your determination to retire from office, for I have more confidence in you than in any other man who now remains connected with the administration of affairs—confidence not merely in

your integrity and private honour, which is unbounded, but in your capacity for the discharge of a public trust.

I foresaw, however, that if Lord Lansdowne should come to the Home Office, with Spring Rice conducting the parliamentary business, and therefore intermeddling in everything, your situation would be a very unpleasant one.

The dominion of the Whigs seems now complete; and every sense of common justice towards those who have devoted the best part of their life to the public service will be obliterated if, after all the opportunities that have lately presented themselves of giving you the position which was your due, you are allowed or rather forced to retire with nothing but the parliamentary pension.

There is nothing worse in our administration of public matters than the depression of all civil service that is not connected with the House of Commons.

I think you have determined wisely in retiring before Lord Lansdowne comes to the office. Depend upon it, he could not have borne that all the confidence in the Home Office should be confidence personally in you. He could not have borne the manifest superiority which you must exhibit, if you are to do any duty at all, and it is much better that your retirement should be your own act, and not his.

I look back upon my long connection with you in office with the greatest gratification, with pride in the reflection that from the first moment of our intercourse to the last there never was an interruption of the most unreserved confidence.

I do not overrate my feelings towards you when I assure you with perfect truth that there is no man living the loss of whose esteem and friendship would grieve me more deeply than the loss of yours.

After appreciation so gratifying of his former labours, Mr. Hobhouse, on the return of his old chief to office, naturally tendered all assistance in his power. Mr. Peel's answer indicates some of the reforms he had in view.

To Mr. Hobhouse.

(Private.)

Whitehall: Feb. 4, 1828.

I am truly thankful to you for your offers of continued assistance.

I have kept Mr. Phillips as my Under Secretary. I wish I could have made the offer of the office to Gregson, but I thought there would be something of harshness and injustice in removing an unexceptionable man, who had relinquished his profession to accept it.

I will ask you in the course of a few days to look at two or three questions that I must 'envisage,' to use a fine word of Lord Wellesley's. A Bill for abolishing Church briefs I must bring in. I presume the Bill consolidating the law as to offences against the person is ready. But I have been so occupied with foreign affairs that I have hardly had time to enter the office.

What must I do with the Police? I fear throughout the whole country it is most defective. Some general power to a very full attendance of magistrates to employ police officers according to necessity might be useful. It has always appeared to me that the country has entirely outgrown its police institutions. The difficulty in this, as in ten thousand cases, is to devise any general rule which shall apply to a society so varying in its subdivisions as ours is.

'Church Briefs' were collections authorised by law for raising money for building or repairing churches and chapels. The Act was now repealed, and in its place letters patent were issued to a Society for rebuilding and repairing Churches.

Three days later, in his first speech of the Session, Mr. Peel referred to the satisfactory working of the Acts introduced by him during his former tenure of the Home Office, for the reformation of Criminal Law.

I hold in my hand the five Acts comprised in one small volume. It contains the substance of what was before spread over one hundred and thirty Acts of Parliament. In this I find great encouragement to proceed,

and I do not despair of effecting great good of the same kind.

While active in his own department, Mr. Peel found time to inspire with similar vigour his colleagues responsible for finance and foreign affairs.

On February 15, in moving the appointment of a Finance Committee, he reviewed the income and expenditure of the last five years, and so far anticipated Mr. Goulburn's budget as to announce a probable reduction of burdens by 1,100,000*l.* He also expressed a sanguine hope that it would be found possible greatly to simplify the system of public accounts.

It was he who pressed for interference in behalf of the Greeks carried off from Navarino. To the Foreign Secretary of State he writes almost in the tone of a Prime Minister.

To Lord Dudley.

April 5, 1828.

Should not an immediate communication be made to Mr. Barker or some other authority respecting the Greek women and children landed at Alexandria at the latter end of December last?

Might he not be told that there were different reports received as to the number—that while his own statement made them amount to 5,500, Captain Richards of the 'Pelorus' reported their number to be 600?

Require him to send precise information, first, as to the number—specifying that of men, women, and children—of non-combatants brought to Alexandria from Navarino; secondly, as to the mode in which on their arrival they were disposed of, whether they were retained as prisoners of war, or hostages, or kept as slaves on account of the Government, or disposed of in the slave market at Alexandria as slaves to individuals. Thirdly, require him to procure all the particulars he can respecting the mode in which Ibrahim Pasha got possession of these persons in the Morea.

I think he ought also to be asked for information generally as to the state of slavery in Egypt, and the

probable number of Christians detained in a state of slavery, their condition and treatment. But he should be desired to postpone his report on this head until his inquiries on the particular subject of the recent information from the Morea have been completed.

If necessary, inquiries might be made from some of the Greeks themselves, as to the circumstances under which they fell into the hands of the Pasha, their treatment, &c.

Might not he, or some person sent for the purpose, be desired to make a friendly but very urgent representation to the Pasha, on the subject of these particular slaves, pressing for their return to their native country so soon as arrangements can be made for their reception there? Might not facilities for their reconveyance be offered?

Pray consider all this as soon as you possibly can.

(*Private.*) Can the instructions suggested in the inclosed be safely delayed until Mr. Briggs can set out? Should not a messenger be sent immediately?

Before the close of this year Mr. Peel's intention radically to reform the Police of London took definite shape. He thus sketches the first outlines of the force now familiarly associated with his name.

To Mr. Hobhouse.

(*Private.*)

Whitehall: Dec. 12, 1828.

I have under my consideration at present very extensive changes in the Police of the metropolis.

You perhaps have read the Police Report of last Session. I am now employing Gregson in drawing up a Bill to give effect to the recommendations of the Report, so far as they concern the constitution of the nightly watch.

My plan is shortly this—to appoint some authority which shall take charge of the night police of the metropolis, connecting the force employed by night with the existing police establishments now under the Home Office and Bow Street; the authority which has charge of the police establishments, horse patrol, day patrol, night

patrol, to act under the immediate superintendence of the Home Office, and in daily communication with it.

I propose that charge of the night police should be taken gradually. I mean that my system of police should be substituted for the parochial system, not *per saltum*, but by degrees.

I will first organise a force, which I will not call by the name of 'watchmen,' which shall be sufficient to take charge of a district surrounding Charing Cross, composed, we will say, of four or five parishes. It shall extend on the City side as far as Temple Bar and the boundary of the City on that side, having the river as far as Westminster Bridge as the limit on another side. When it is notified to the parishes that comprise this district that this force is ready to act, and prepared to take charge of the district, the functions of the parochial watch in each of the districts shall terminate, and no rates be thereafter leviable on that account.

In the same way, as a little experience shall enable us to manage a more numerous force of nightly police, I propose to signify to other parishes from time to time that the police will take charge of them. Their present watch will continue to act until such signification be made, and will cease when it is made.

The present amount of money issued from the public funds for maintaining horse patrol, foot patrol, magistrates &c. shall continue to be issued, but the surplus that may be requisite to maintain the night police, or to improve and extend the existing patrols, shall be levied from the district within which that night police may act. A Police Rate will be levied instead of the Watch Rate.

In all this, I dare say, I shall have great difficulties to encounter, but the attempt to carry the measure through must be made.

Now the out-parishes—such places as Brentford, Twickenham, Isleworth, Hounslow, and so forth—in all which the police at present is scandalous, will feel, and very justly, that if the new police system succeeds for London, it will injure

them, by driving a fresh stock of thieves from the heart of the metropolis into the environs, and it will be a great object to me, as well as to them, to devise some mode of improving their police. If I undertook the immediate charge my force would be too large, the machine would be too cumbrous and complicated to be well managed by one authority. How, therefore, shall I proceed to provide for these out-parishes ?

My notion is to take power for the Secretary of State to consolidate parishes bordering on the metropolis into a district for police purposes, to appoint Commissioners of Police, two for instance, resident in each parish within the district, who shall have the general superintendence of the district police.

To take an individual case, I would unite Brentford, Hounslow, Twickenham, and Isleworth into a Police du Midi, appoint Commissioners, two from each parish, who should have the power to appoint and pay a competent number of day and night patrols, an inspector, and perhaps three or four mounted patrols, to patrol the bye-roads. The expense to be levied, like the poor rate, proportionately from each parish which formed a part of the district.

I shall be very much obliged to you for any suggestions that may occur to you. My great difficulty is in the details, in determining how the expense shall be provided for, how it shall be justly appropriated among the several parishes.

I thought at first of taking the house tax, and doing nothing more than adding twopence or threepence in the pound to the present duty. But then shops, wharfs, and warehouses, which certainly ought to contribute to the police tax, would be exempt, because they are exempt from the house duty.

Among the confidential letters of this year from the Duke of Wellington, is one commenting on a last attempt made by the King to retain the Duke of Clarence, after his resignation (Memoirs, i. 269), in the post, to which Canning had appointed him, of High Admiral.

The Duke of Wellington to Mr. Peel.

Cheltenham : Aug. 26, 1828.

The King had sent me the letter from the Duke of Clarence, which he showed to you.

In my answer I told him that I could not recommend to his Majesty to alter the terms of the patent, nor will I do so. But I shall see his Majesty on Monday next.

Between the King and his brothers the Government of this country is become a most heart-breaking concern. Nobody can ever know where he stands upon any subject.

I knew that the King was anxious that the Duke of Clarence should remain in office, and so was I. But I thought he was convinced, as I was, that Sir George Cockburn could not be dismissed; that the Duke of Clarence must obey the laws and regulations for his guidance; and that I could not consent to alter the terms of the patent.

As for his Protestantism, I don't so much mind it.

With like firmness Mr. Peel resisted private influence with the King to use his prerogative of mercy.

To the Duke of Wellington.

Whitehall : Dec. 8, 1828.

You can conceive nothing like the efforts to save the life of Hunton.¹ The whole body of Quakers were in motion. One petition alone had 5,000 signatures. Do not take any notice of the inclosed, but such letters make the situation of the Home Secretary a very embarrassing one.

No person ought to be allowed to approach the Lodge in a criminal case. If I had received the King's letter a little later, I might have been still more embarrassed, but I would not have given way under any circumstances.

¹ A Friend who had forged acceptances to Bills of Exchange. He had a wife and ten children, and was recommended to mercy by the jury.

The King to Mr. Peel.

The King is very desirous (if it can be done with any sort of propriety) to save the life of Hunton, at present under the sentence of death and confined in Newgate for forgery, by commuting his punishment into transportation for life.

Royal Lodge : Dec. 5, 1828.

Among the miscellaneous letters is a correspondence on English intolerance, compared with the Inquisition in Spain.

Mr. Joseph Hume to Mr. Peel.

Bryanston Square : Dec. 26, 1828.

The inclosed letter on the subject of persecution for opinion's sake will be better in your hands than mine, as you have the power, if you can but satisfy yourself of the justice and propriety, of putting an end to Mr. Taylor's imprisonment for having stated his opinions on some point of religious controversy.

Religious belief is not voluntary with any man, but is formed, if sincere, from impressions which, to be honest and candid, he cannot resist, and I have always considered the interpretation given to the laws of England on the subject of religious opinions to be as disgraceful as the sanction of the Inquisition would be. I may add that the continuance of such laws is as dark a spot on the character of the Government of Great Britain as the continuance of the Inquisition is in the Government of Spain.

In stating this to you I am far from approving of Mr. Taylor's actions, but there is little blame of his conduct in comparison with the conduct of his oppressors and persecutors.

I hope the perusal of the whole of Tillotson's sermon, from which in the enclosed letter an extract is only given, may raise in you the same feelings of indignation at such proceedings in this land at this time as it has done with me, and that you will pardon my candour.

Mr. Peel to Mr. Hume.

Whitehall : Dec. 27, 1828.

I beg to return you the enclosed letter, assuring you that I most willingly 'pardon your candour,' and that I have acceded to your wish, that I would read the whole of Tillotson's sermon, from which you have sent me an extract.

The sermon, which is upon 'Constancy in the Profession of the True Religion,' does not appear to me very applicable to the case of Mr. Taylor.

It vindicates against the extravagant pretensions of the Church of Rome the right of every man of mature age and vigorous understanding to examine his religion, and consider the reasons and grounds of it; but I see nothing in that sermon which claims for any man the privilege to give public lectures recommending infidelity, and turning into open ridicule the ceremonies and doctrines of the Christian religion.

As you are studying the works of Dr. Tillotson, allow me in return to recommend to your attention two sermons of that great preacher, which bear more immediately upon the case of Mr. Taylor. One is upon 'The injurious and dangerous Folly of Scoffing at Religion.' The other, entitled 'The Protestant Religion vindicated from Novelty,' while it denies to the civil magistrate the right to compel belief in, or rather assent to, religious doctrines, claims for him the full right to countenance and support the established religion, 'to establish the true worship of God in such manner as he thinks best, to permit none to affront it, or to seduce from it those that are under his care.'

The following relates to a 'delicate' question for the Home Office—the murders by Burke and Hare.

To Mr. Goulburn.

Dec. 6, 1828.

I have received the enclosed most extraordinary statement from the Lord Advocate of Scotland. Twelve murders

in nine months, for the purpose of supplying mortuary schools with bodies for dissection !

Directions were privately given some time since, by my request, to the Custom House officers to permit the import of dead bodies from France without minute inquiry, or at least without exposure.

It is, of course, a very delicate subject to write upon, as it involves a connivance at a statutable offence. But what can be done, if repeated murder is the consequence of an obstruction to the supply of bodies by other means ?

Another letter gives a lively account of the early fighting instincts of a gentleman who afterwards became well known as Chaplain-General of the Army.

The Bishop of Oxford to Mr. Peel.

Christchurch : April 9, 1828.

Your correspondent Mr. Gleig is the son of a Scotch bishop of that name, and is himself well known as the author of 'The Subaltern' and 'The Campaign of New Orleans.' He was formerly of Balliol College, where, being reprehended by the little Master (at present Vice-Chancellor) at a college lecture, he gave the first symptom of military prowess by calling out the lecturer. Jenkyns, having no inclination for battle, recommended Gleig to give way to his sanguinary propensities by going forthwith into the army, which advice Gleig followed, and served in the Peninsula. After his return home, St. Sebastian having cooled his courage, he went into Orders, and I believe is a very respectable clergyman.

CHAPTER III.

1828.

Roman Catholic Relief—Small Majority in Parliament for Concession—Great Majority in Clare for O'Connell—The Lord Lieutenant advises Concession—Mr. Peel tenders Resignation, but supports Concession—Canning's Friends resign—The Lord High Admiral resigns—The Lord Lieutenant recalled.

A HOME SECRETARY has special charge of Ireland, and Ireland this year engaged so large a share of Mr. Peel's thoughts as to demand a separate chapter.

On May 12 a motion for considering the state of the laws affecting Roman Catholics was carried by a majority of 272 to 266; and on May 20 a division on the proposed transference of a seat in Parliament from East Retford to Birmingham led to the resignations of Mr. Huskisson, Lord Dudley, Lord Palmerston, Mr. Grant, and Mr. Lamb.

On the bearing upon his own action of these two events Sir Robert Peel remarks (*Memoirs*, i. 102):

My own retirement at an early period would have been determined on Sir Francis Burdett's motion. I should have taken the course in 1828 which I had wished and intended to take in 1825, and have declined to remain Minister for the Home Department and to lead the House of Commons, being in a minority on the most important of domestic questions.

But the threatened danger to the Duke of Wellington's Government from the retirement of Mr. Huskisson and his friends, and the real difficulty of constructing, from

any combination of parties, any other Government at that time, so recently after the breaking up of the Administration over which Lord Ripon had presided, induced me not to insist upon retirement, at the very moment when other members of the Government were withdrawing, upon totally distinct grounds, their co-operation.

This secession of Canning's followers had further consequences. The vacant Presidency of the Board of Trade was given to an Irish Member, and when he sought re-election he was utterly routed.

The Irish county constituencies were in fact, if they chose to be so, democratic—as much so as at the present day—owing to what Sir Robert Peel calls ‘the inconsiderate arrangement made in 1793, when the elective franchise was lavishly conferred on the pauper tenantry of Ireland.’ The ‘forty-shilling freeholders’ were practically small tenants at a rack rent. This class had voted hitherto with their landlords; now they voted with their priests. ‘All the gentry and all the fifty-pound freeholders’ supported Fitzgerald. But not so the peasant farmers. ‘All the great interests broke down, and the desertion was universal.’ The contest was hopeless. Fitzgerald withdrew; O’Connell was returned, though as a Roman Catholic he could not take the oaths. The Memoir continues :

This afforded a decisive proof, not only that the instrument on which the Protestant proprietor had hitherto mainly relied for the maintenance of his political influence [the forty-shilling franchise for tenants] had completely failed him, but that through the combined exertions of the agitator and the priest—or I should rather say through the contagious sympathies of a common cause among all classes of the Roman Catholic population—the instrument of defence and supremacy had been converted into a weapon fatal to the authority of the landlord.

However men might differ as to the consequences which ought to follow the event, no one denied its vast importance. It was foreseen by the most intelligent men that the Clare election would be the turning point in the

Catholic question, the point '*partes ubi se via findit in ambas.*'

Can there be a doubt that the example of the county would have been all-powerful in the case of every future election in Ireland, for those counties in which a Roman Catholic constituency preponderated?

'Concede nothing to agitation' is the ready cry of those who are not responsible—the vigour of whose decisions is often proportionate to their own personal immunity from danger, and to their imperfect knowledge of the true state of affairs.

A prudent Minister, before he determines against all concession, against any yielding or compromise of former opinions, must well consider what it is that he has to resist, and what are his powers of resistance. His task would be an easy one if it were sufficient to resolve that he would yield nothing to violence or to the menace of physical force.

But far different was the case with which the Government had now to deal in Ireland.

What was the evil to be apprehended? Not force, not violence, not any act of which law could take cognisance. The real danger was in the peaceable and legitimate exercise of a franchise, according to the will and conscience of the holder.

In such an exercise of that franchise, not merely permitted, but encouraged and approved, by constitutional law, was involved a revolution in the electoral system of Ireland, the transfer of political power, so far as it was connected with representation, from one party to another.

And, with power thus transferred to the majority, Sir Robert Peel asks :

How was Ireland to be governed? How was the Protestant Constitution in Church and State to be maintained in that part of the Empire?

It was as with the change in 1885 to household suffrage. At county elections in Ireland henceforth the Catholic peasantry would have the upper hand. The Memoir proceeds :

No doubt all this was very offensive to public opinion in England and Scotland. But through what channel could that public opinion exercise any control over Irish agitation, or render any aid to the Government in resisting it? Was there any other, except that of Parliament, except through such a manifestation of the strength of public opinion as should induce Parliament to alter the existing law, to control the liberty which was said to have been abused, and to extinguish the franchise, which the landlord could no longer command or influence?

No such alteration of the law could have been expected from a House of Commons which had decided that the experiment of another remedy for the distracted state of Ireland, namely, the establishment of civil equality, ought to be tried without delay.

It may be said that Parliament might again have been dissolved. But what ground was there to expect that a House of Commons elected in 1828 or 1829 would come to a different conclusion on the Catholic question from the House of Commons of 1826?

If there was little hope in a renewed appeal to the constituencies of Great Britain, was the prospect of such an appeal in Ireland more satisfactory? Is there any sane man responsible for the public peace—any sane man sincerely anxious to support the Protestant interest in Ireland, who, after the event of the Clare election in June 1828, would have advised a simultaneous appeal to all the Irish constituencies in the summer or autumn?

If the Irish Government could neither turn for aid to the then existing Parliament, nor could cherish the hope of receiving it from one to be newly elected, could it safely trust for the maintenance of its authority to the extreme exercise of its ordinary powers, supported in the case of necessity by the organised and disciplined force at its command, namely the constabulary and military force?

I deliberately affirm that a Minister of the Crown, responsible, at the time of which I am speaking, for the public peace and the public welfare, would have grossly and scandalously neglected his duty if he had failed to consider whether it might not be possible that the fever of political and religious excitement—which was quickening the pulse and fluttering the bosom of the whole Catholic population, which had inspired the serf of Clare with the resolution and energy of a freeman, which had in the twinkling of an eye made all consideration of personal gratitude, ancient family connection, local preferences, the fear of worldly injury, the hope of worldly advantage, subordinate to one absorbing sense of religious obligation and public duty—whether, I say, it might not be possible that the contagion of that feverish excitement might spread beyond the barriers which, under ordinary circumstances, the habits of military obedience and the strictness of military discipline oppose to all such external influences.

Sir Robert Peel goes on to show that the distinguished soldier who was governing Ireland did not contemplate without anxiety the pernicious effects of such influence on the fidelity of some portions at least of the force under his command. The correspondence at this date with Lord Anglesey is given with great fullness in the Memoir.

The most important letter was one sent through the new Chief Secretary.

Lord Anglesey to Lord Francis Gower.

July 2, 1828.

Such is the extraordinary power of the agitators, that I am quite certain they could lead on the people to open rebellion at a moment's notice, and their organisation is such that, in the hands of desperate and intelligent leaders, they would be extremely formidable.

The hope, and indeed the probability, of present tranquillity rests upon the forbearance and the not very determined courage of O'Connell, and on his belief, as well

as that of the principal men amongst them, that they will carry their cause by increasing agitation and by intimidation, without coming to blows.

I believe their success inevitable—that no power under heaven can arrest its progress.

There may be rebellion, you may put to death thousands, you may suppress it, but it will only put off the day of compromise.

All that even the most determined opposers of emancipation say is, that it is better to leave things as they are than to risk any change.

But will things remain as they are? Certainly not. They are bad, they must get worse, and I see no possible means of improving them but by depriving the demagogues of the power of directing the people. And by taking Messrs. O'Connell, Sheil, and the rest of them from the Association, and placing them in the House of Commons, this desirable object would be at once accomplished.

I abhor the idea of truckling to the overbearing Catholic demagogues. To make any movement towards conciliation under the present excitement and system of terror would revolt me. But I do most conscientiously, and after the most earnest consideration of the subject, give it as my conviction that the first moment of composure and tranquillity should be seized to signify the intention of adjusting the question, lest another period of calm should not present itself.

Such was the advice given by the King's 'Protestant Lord Lieutenant.' Mr. Peel, treating the letter—so soon as it reached him—as official, acted upon it without an hour's delay.

Mr. Peel to Lord Anglesey.

Whitehall: July 13, 1828.

I received the letter yesterday morning, and in the course of the day it was read at the Cabinet.

We were all of opinion that the King ought to be apprised of it, and the Duke of Wellington, who was to see

his Majesty on another business to-day, will take your letter with him to Windsor.

The course which it may be ultimately fitting for the King's advisers to pursue, involves so many considerations, each of so much importance, that I am confident you will not expect from me at the present moment any declaration of opinion.

You will see that I have with the utmost promptitude submitted your views, with respect to the present state of Ireland and the only effectual remedies for it, to those to whom they ought to be made known.

The truth was that privately, some weeks before the date of this letter, Mr. Peel had made known to the Prime Minister his wish to retire from office, but at the same time had expressed a hope that in the House of Lords the Duke 'would take a course in debate which would not preclude him from taking the whole state of Ireland into consideration during the recess, with the view of adjusting the question.'

Agreeing with this suggestion, the Duke, and also Lord Lyndhurst, the King's 'Protestant Lord Chancellor,' had already spoken (June 9) in terms implying a disposition to concede the Catholic claims.

The Chief Secretary was similarly inclined.

From Lord Francis Gower.

(Private and confidential.)

Irish Office : July 12, 1828.

The only report which has reached me respecting Lord John Russell's intentions is that his endeavour will be to make an impression upon the House and Government with regard to the necessity of Catholic Emancipation, and to establish, if possible, some ground of expectation that the claims of the Catholics may be favourably considered at no distant period.

Now if he move an address to the Crown with this object, and with the view of promoting it by obtaining a strong division, and if that motion be temperately and judiciously worded, I think it at least possible that I might

be called upon to support it. As my leader in the House of Commons you have a right to the early and unreserved communication of my feeling on the subject; and in any case I should be most anxious to confide it to you, wherever my honour or political consistency could possibly be concerned.

In Ulster a leading Protestant, brother-in-law and formerly private secretary to Mr. Peel, caused much excitement by announcing that the Catholic Association must be conciliated, as it could not be crushed.

To Mr. Goulburn.

Did you ever read anything like Dawson's speech, except, perhaps, his former ones on the other side? The time, the place, the topics, the tone! It is very singular that a man could blunder in everything with such sinister dexterity.

The Memoir goes on :

At the close of the Session of 1828 it became incumbent upon me to decide without delay on the course which I ought to pursue.

It was open to me to retain office, or to relinquish it, persisting in either case in offering continued resistance to concession. There could be little doubt, considering that the King was opposed to concession, and that a clear majority of the House of Lords was opposed to it, that, notwithstanding the recent vote of the House of Commons in its favour, resistance to concession would for a time prevail. It would so far prevail as to obstruct the final settlement of the Catholic question.

But the same sad state of things must continue—a divided Cabinet, a divided Parliament, the strength of political parties so nicely balanced as to preclude any decisive course, either of concession on the one hand, or the vigorous assertion of authority on the other.

I maturely and anxiously considered every point which required consideration, and I formed a decision as to the obligation of public duty, of which I may say with truth that it was wholly at variance with that which the regard

for my own personal interests or feelings would have dictated.

My intention was to relinquish office, but I resolved not to relinquish it without previously placing on record my opinion, that the public interests required that the principle on which the then existing and preceding Governments had been formed should no longer be adhered to; that the Catholic question should cease to be an open question; that the whole condition of Ireland, political and social, should be taken into consideration by the Cabinet, precisely in the same manner in which every other question of grave importance was considered, and with the same power to offer advice upon it to the Sovereign.

I resolved also to place on record a decided opinion, that there was less of evil and less of danger in considering the Catholic question with a view to its final adjustment than in offering continued resistance to that adjustment, and to give every assurance that, after retirement from office, I would in a private capacity act upon the opinion thus given.

I left London for Brighton very soon after the close of the Session, having made a previous arrangement with the Duke of Wellington that he should send to me a memorandum explanatory of his views on the state of Ireland and on the Catholic question, and that I should write to him fully in reply.

On August 11 I wrote to him the letter which follows.

To the Duke of Wellington.

I have read with the greatest attention the papers which I have received from you, consisting, independently of the private letters, first of a proposal to the King that the state of Ireland shall be considered by his Government with a view to the settlement of the Catholic question; and secondly of the outline of a plan for the settlement of that question, which you have communicated to the Lord Chancellor.

I shall give you without the slightest reserve my opinions upon the whole subject. They are necessarily—as I am writing by return of post—committed to paper very hastily, but I have no wish, in communicating with you, to weigh expressions, or to conceal anything which occurs to me.

I have uniformly opposed what is called Catholic Emancipation, and have rested my opposition upon broad and uncompromising grounds.

I wish I could say that my views upon the question were materially changed, and that I now believed that full concessions to Roman Catholics could be made either exempt from the dangers which I have apprehended from them, or productive of the full advantages which their advocates anticipate from the grant of them.

But, whatever may be my opinion upon these points, I cannot deny that the state of Ireland under existing circumstances is most unsatisfactory; that it becomes necessary✓ to make your choice between different kinds and different degrees of evil—to compare the actual danger, resulting from the union and organisation of the Roman Catholic body, and the incessant agitation in Ireland, with prospective and apprehended dangers to the constitution or religion of the country, and maturely to consider whether it may not✓ be better to encounter every eventual risk of concession than to submit to the certain continuance, or rather perhaps the certain aggravation, of existing evils.

Whatever be the ultimate result of concession, there would be an advantage in the sincere and honest attempt to settle the question on just principles, which it is difficult✓ to rate too highly in the present state of affairs.

The Protestant mind would be united—not at first, for the party opposed to concession would probably under any circumstances be a powerful one. If, however, concession should tranquillise Ireland, and produce the effects predicted by its advocates, that party would gradually and rapidly acquiesce in it. If concession on just principles were rejected by the Roman Catholics, or if it were abused—if they were put clearly and substantially in the wrong—

then the Protestants of all shades of opinion would be united into one firm and compact body, and would ultimately overbear all opposition.

The present state of affairs in Ireland is such, the danger is so menacing, that it is an object of great importance to lay the foundation of cordial union and co-operation among the Protestants of the Empire, supposing you should fail in establishing the more general and more desirable union among all classes of the King's subjects.

I have thus written to you without reserve upon the first and great question of all—the policy of seriously considering this long-agitated question with a view to its adjustment. I have proved to you, I trust, that no false delicacy in respect to past declarations of opinion, no fear of the imputation of inconsistency, will prevent me from taking that part which present dangers and a new position of affairs may require.

I am ready, at the hazard of any sacrifice, to maintain the opinion which I now deliberately give—that there is upon the whole less of evil in making a decided effort to settle the Catholic question than in leaving it, as it has been left, an open question, the Government being undecided with respect to it, and paralysed, in consequence of that indecision, upon many occasions peculiarly requiring promptitude and energy of action.

I must at the same time express a very strong opinion that it would not conduce to the satisfactory adjustment of the question, that the charge of it in the House of Commons should be committed to my hands.

I put all personal feelings out of the question ; they are, or ought to be, very subordinate considerations in matters of such moment. And I give the best proof that I disregard them by avowing, that I am quite ready to commit myself to the support of the principle of a measure of ample concession and relief, and to use every effort to promote the final arrangement of it.

But my support will be more useful if I give it, with the cordiality with which it should be given, out of office. Any

authority which I may possess as tending to reconcile the Protestants to the measure would be increased by my retirement.

You must also bear in mind the state of parties in Parliament. The Government ought to take every precaution that any measure of relief which may be proposed shall not only be carried by majorities, but shall have as far as possible the decided and unequivocal sense of Parliament expressed in its favour. You must look, therefore, at the character and constitution of the majority by which you are to carry it.

You will have a reluctant assent on the part of many of the best friends of the Government, a decided opposition perhaps from some.

The great mass of support must be looked for from the ranks of those who are, if not habitually opposed to the Government, at least under no tie to support it, and perhaps not favourably disposed towards it. Can you depend upon them for zealous co-operation in the carrying of the measure?

Consider these things well. If the question is to be taken up, there is clearly no safe alternative but the settlement of it.

Every consideration of private feelings and individual interests must be disregarded. From a very strong sense of what is best for the success of the measure, I relieve you from all difficulties with respect to myself. I do not merely volunteer my retirement at whatever may be the most convenient time; I do not merely give you the promise that out of office, be the sacrifices that I foresee, public or private, what they may, I will cordially co-operate with you in the settlement of the question, and cordially support your Government; but I add to this my decided and deliberate opinion, that it will lead to the satisfactory adjustment of the question if the originating of it in the House of Commons, and the general superintendence of its progress, be committed to other hands than mine.

Later on, this deliberate opinion, under great stress, was changed. But the expression of feeling which follows shows that, even had Mr. Peel found it possible to take the course he at first proposed—had he been able to assist in the final settlement of the Catholic question without remaining in office, and taking the chief part in preparing and in passing the Bill—even so, he foresaw for himself results extremely painful.

Twenty years have elapsed since the above letter was written. I read it now with the full testimony of my own heart and conscience to the perfect sincerity of the advice which I then gave, and the declaration which I then made ; with the same testimony also to the fact that that letter was written with a clear foresight of the penalties to which the course I resolved to take would expose me—the rage of party, the rejection by the University of Oxford, the alienation of private friends, the interruption of family affections. Other penalties, such as the loss of office, and of royal favour, I would not condescend to notice, if they were not the heaviest in the estimation of vulgar and low-minded men, incapable of appreciating higher motives of public conduct.

Sir Robert Peel then sums up his case.

My judgment may be erroneous. From the deep interest I have in the result—though now only so far as future fame is concerned—it cannot be impartial. Yet surely I do not err in believing that, when the various circumstances on which my decision was taken are calmly and dispassionately considered—the state of political parties ; the recent discussions in Parliament ; the result of the Clare election, and the prospect which it opened ; the earnest representations and emphatic warnings of the Chief Governor of Ireland ; the evil, rapidly increasing, of divided counsels in the Cabinet, and of conflicting decisions in the Houses of Parliament ; the necessity for some systematic and vigorous course of policy in respect to Ireland ; the impossibility, even if it were wise, that the

policy should be one of coercion—surely I do not err in believing that I shall not hereafter be condemned for having needlessly and precipitately—still less for having dishonestly and treacherously—counselled the attempt to adjust the long litigated question, that had for so many years precluded the cordial co-operation of public men, and had left Ireland the arena for fierce political conflicts, annually renewed, without the means of authoritative interposition on the part of the Crown.

Enclosed in the letter of August 11 was a paper giving Mr. Peel's conception of the settlement to be accomplished. A few extracts show the lines on which he thought it best to move.

From Mr. Peel's Memorandum, August 11, 1828.

(Most private and confidential.)

Whenever it is once determined that an attempt should be made by the Government to settle the Catholic question, there can be, I think, but one opinion—that the settlement should be, if possible, a complete one.

The three great points which present themselves most prominently in the consideration are these :

First. The footing on which the Roman Catholics shall be placed in respect to the enjoyment of civil privileges.

I should answer at once—equality, equal capacity with other classes for the enjoyment of the offices and distinctions of the State.

I do not mean to say that there must be no exception as to particular offices, but I think the ruling principle must be equality of civil privilege.

After you have abandoned the present system of exclusion by law, the great security against the possession of undue power and influence by the Roman Catholics (so far as civil office confers power and influence) must be in the discretion of the Crown and its advisers.

Secondly. As to the elective franchise. The Duke of Wellington's memorandum proposes that no elector shall

vote who does not contribute to local charges of one kind or another five pounds annually.

The principle is a very good one, but it could not be applied without much previous consideration and inquiry as to the effect which it would produce in different counties of Ireland. I believe that five pounds [in rates] would be much too large a sum to take as the qualification of the right of voting.

Thirdly. The regulations to be established with respect to the exercise of the Roman Catholic religion and its relation to the State.

Here is the great difficulty of the question. And it ought to be well considered, as a point preliminary to all others in relation to this branch of the subject, whether it would be better to leave the Roman Catholic religion on the footing that it stands on at present, tolerated, connived at, but not encouraged by the State, or to give it a partial establishment, and that degree of sanction and authority which must be inevitably given by the payment of its ministers by the State.

So far as the Roman Catholics are concerned, you are, I conceive, at perfect liberty to leave the Roman Catholic religion as you find it. It may be policy to act otherwise, but there is no ground for complaint if you do not.

Those subjects of the King who are not of the established religion may have a very urgent claim for the equality of civil privileges, but they can have no claim of right that the ministers of their religion should be paid by the State. The admission of any such claim on the part of the Roman Catholics would produce similar claims on the part of Dissenters.

Will there not be among the religious classes of the community a very great repugnance, founded on higher motives than the unwillingness to be taxed, against contributing in any manner to the propagation or maintenance of the doctrines of the Church of Rome?

The very designation of our own faith is derived from

protestation against those doctrines, and very great caution must be used to prevent the excitement of a religious feeling, more difficult to combat than political apprehensions or anticipations.

While secretly this correspondence was passing between Home Secretary and Prime Minister, the Lord Lieutenant, who knew nothing of it, again wrote, urging action.

From Lord Anglesey.

July 26, 1828.

If I should fortunately be enabled, by the advice and the warnings I give, to keep this country in a quiet state for a little time longer, if the Association should cease to agitate, and there were to be anything like an appearance of moderation, I must seriously conjure you to signify an intention of taking the state of Ireland into consideration in the first days of the next Session of Parliament.

At the date of this renewed appeal even the Cabinet was still in ignorance of Mr. Peel's intended resignation, and of the proposed change of policy, nor had any sanction for it been obtained as yet from the King. The Home Secretary, therefore, could give no assurance more definite than this.

To Lord Anglesey.

Aug. 14, 1828.

I have no doubt that the advisers of the King will continue to direct the most serious consideration to the whole state of Ireland, will weigh most maturely all the circumstances connected with its present condition, and determine some time before the commencement of the next Session of Parliament what advice it may be proper to offer his Majesty as to the course fitting to be pursued, and the declarations to be made when Parliament shall assemble.

Lord Anglesey replied :

I have almost pledged myself for the tranquillity of the country until the meeting of Parliament, but I protest

I dare not encourage the hope of its continuance beyond that period, unless there is a determination on the part of the Government to settle the question of emancipation.

Letters not included in the Memoir illustrate the state of Ireland during the autumn. Within two months after the Clare election it became necessary to decide whether or not to risk another bye-election in Galway, by creating a peerage promised to the member, Mr. Daly. Mr. Peel was more inclined than the Duke of Wellington to try the experiment. The Duke deemed it impolitic, even if possible, by success in one exceptional constituency to relieve general apprehensions, on the effect of which he counted, both to obtain concessions for the Catholics, and to cut down the democratic franchise, which in Irish counties gave nearly all the voting power to peasant farmers.

From the Duke of Wellington.

Cheltenham : Aug. 27, 1828.

I should be afraid of the consequences of giving credit to anything we may hear of the influence of property in favour of Mr. Martin, as against that of the priests in favour of Sir George Shea.

It is true that there are more Roman Catholic gentry in Galway than in any other county in Ireland, and they may have more influence over their tenantry than the Protestant gentry ; but that influence did not appear in the Clare election to produce more effect.

We can avoid to make this creation, and the defeat which may be and the riot and disturbance which must be the consequence, without adverting to ulterior and more disastrous consequences. We can avoid it without inconvenience even to Daly, as, the King's pleasure having been taken and the warrant signed, he must have the peerage.

I therefore think that we ought to avoid all these evils.

To the Duke of Wellington.

Whitehall: Sept. 11, 1828.

I beg you to consider the inclosed letter most strictly confidential.

The writer is a leading man in the Roman Catholic Association, and has been long connected with the press of Ireland. He is a Galway man, and as it might detract somewhat from the value of his opinion I ought to add that I have some reason to think that he is a natural son of [the intended candidate] Dick Martin.

Read what he says as to the probable issue of a contest, comparing the risk we run and the evil we incur from a defeat in Galway with the advantages of a successful struggle against the Roman Catholic Association.

I am inclined to think the latter preponderate. If the Roman Catholic gentry could beat the priesthood in Galway—if Martin, refusing a pledge dictated by the Roman Catholic Association, could carry the election in spite of them, the consequences would be very important.

We run the risk of riot certainly; but if the Roman Catholics are divided in Galway, the riot that would ensue would be of a very different character from that of Clare.

If Martin should be beaten, the mere circumstance of his being beaten, without riot, would be of no great importance.

From the Duke of Wellington.

Woodford: Sept. 12, 1828.

I doubt the expediency of the contest in Galway. It is obvious that Martin has no money, and that Gregory's correspondent does not write with much confidence of his success.

If the Brunswick clubs should take up his cause, which is not impossible, it is probable that the cause of his opponent will be warmly taken up by the priests in Galway, and by the Roman Catholics in general. In that case Martin

would certainly be beat, and we should have disturbed the peace of a very important part of the country in search of a triumph in a contest which is very uncertain in our view of the case, and in which we may be defeated.

I put out of the question all discussion of the danger attending the placing the two factions in collision at an election at the present moment.

But in the existing state of the Roman Catholic question, and of our own discussion upon it, is it desirable that we should weaken the impression made upon men's minds of the strength of the combined factions of priests and demagogues ?

I admit that the state of the county of Galway is different from that of every other county in Ireland. You and I know the fact, and the causes of it. But could we explain either to others ? By beating the Association in Galway do we not cut the ground from under our own feet on which we are to stand in order to prevail upon Parliament to legislate upon the franchise of forty-shilling freeholders, and for the purpose of establishing the influence of the Crown over the Roman Catholic clergy ?

I confess that what has moved me has been the Monaghan, the Louth, the Waterford, and the Clare elections. I see clearly that we have to suffer here all the consequences of a practical democratic reform in Parliament, if we do not do something to remedy the evils.

Upon the whole, then, you will see that I think that the success of Martin in Galway is very doubtful, and that even if it were certain I should not think it desirable.

From Lord Francis Gower.

(Private.)

Phoenix Park : Sept. 5, 1828.

I have directed from time to time letters to be forwarded to you containing accounts of the terrible state of organisation of the peasantry in Tipperary. Hitherto the priests and agitators have succeeded in keeping the people under their control, but neither priest nor agitator can ensure the

continuance of this power in their own hands, supposing that their own fears and interests should alike induce them to exercise their influence in preventing rebellion. If this power of collecting a large numerical force upon any point in a few hours should be directed towards any open violation of the law, instead of the pretexts of pacification &c. which are now made use of, I know of no remedy but a speedy proclamation and vigorous enforcement of martial law.

O'Connell is behaving in his usual manner. Perhaps the most insolent of his performances has been his placard, or firman, of protection to the Lord Lieutenant. I have no doubt that, in his pursuit of mischief in any shape, his object in this has been to excite distrust of the Lord Lieutenant on your part.

To Lord Anglesey.

Drayton Manor: Sept. 25, 1828.

For some time past we have taken care to station the disposable force in this country in such a manner that it might most easily be made available for service in Ireland. There are at present six battalions, besides cavalry, stationed at the points most convenient for embarkation for Ireland.

Lord Anglesey to Mr. Peel.

Rich View: Sept. 28, 1828.

I have had a bitter draught to swallow. I have been aware that the course of forbearance I have felt it my duty to adopt would subject me to the vituperation and misrepresentation that is industriously propagating, while by a contrary conduct, by what would have been called an act of vigour, by at once issuing a proclamation and dispersing the obnoxious meetings, I should have gained the applause of one very powerful party in the country, of many of the great Catholic proprietors, and of all the timid on both sides.

But what should I have risked? In my opinion, the

danger of a crisis which might have involved the whole kingdom in confusion, and perhaps in blood.

As it is, I have strong hope that tranquillity may be preserved, but if unhappily I should be compelled to act with that vigour which is so loudly called for, I feel confident that my arm will have been amazingly strengthened by the moderation and forbearance I have evinced.

Towards the close of the year it was thought necessary to remove the Lord Lieutenant. The reasons for this were discussed in the House of Lords, May 4, 1829, and much of the correspondence was read. But in addition several private letters bearing on the subject between the King, the Prime Minister, and the Home Secretary, at this distance of time may properly be made public.

From the King.

(Private.)

The King sends his very kind regards to Mr. Peel.

The King has read with the most careful attention Lord Anglesey's letters to Mr. Peel. There is a strange contradiction in them. The one speaks of distant rebellion, and the other (if the King understands it right) of immediate rebellion, but in both the language is undecided, and certainly not suited to the present perilous situation of Ireland. The law officers are certainly inefficient. This defect must be remedied, and should be the first thing thought of.

The King most highly approves of Mr. Peel's last letter to Lord Anglesey. The King will only add that Ireland cannot remain as it is.

Royal Lodge: Friday, July 25, 1828. Three-quarters past 11 A.M.

From the Duke of Wellington.

London: Aug. 6, 1828.

The object for which the King wished to see me yesterday was to propose to me to remove Lord Anglesey from the Government of Ireland.

I told him that his presence there was certainly very inconvenient, but that I was very much afraid that his removal would be found still more so. I told him that we could not state the real causes of dissatisfaction with his conduct, some of which are personal, and that the measure would be liable to much misrepresentation, and might do mischief. He acquiesced in my decision, but not very willingly.

He had shown my paper to the Duke of Cumberland, who, he says, is equally convinced of the necessity of considering the subject. I did not see the Duke of Cumberland.

To the Duke of Wellington.

Brighton: Aug. 7, 1828.

I entirely concur in the advice which you gave to the King as to the recall of Lord Anglesey.

It would be very easy to get a much better man, but I think we should take no step at the present moment, which will prevent the excitement in Ireland from gradually subsiding. It is subsiding, and perhaps it may not be easy to revive it to the full extent.

If the advisers of the Crown should think the settlement of the Catholic question practicable, I can well conceive that they might wish to have another man in Ireland at that time; but I am confident that just now, unless the Government is compelled to act very decidedly to suppress actual danger from insurrection, it had better remain very quiet, though very vigilant.

Aug. 16.—Just look at the answer which Lord Anglesey has given to the Presbyterians of Ulster.

They come to him with a loyal and perfectly contented address, and contented they well may be, for they have been on a better footing as to eligibility for office than any other class whatever of the King's subjects. The Protestant of the Church of England was subject to the Sacramental test, but for the last half-century the Protestant Dissenter in Ireland has been subject to no test.

Lord Anglesey informs them that 'it is pleasing to observe men who appear to forget their past privations in the present enjoyment of equality of rights.' He informs them also that 'they have long and zealously, yet patiently, sought the attainment of their just privileges.'

Sept. 18. (*Most private.*)—I enclose another letter from Lord Anglesey.

As to the tone, it appears to me that the most prudent course is to maintain as much reserve as possible, both in respect to the spirit in which he writes and to the general question to which he adverts.

I have already informed him that previously to the meeting of Parliament the King's advisers will take the present state of Ireland into consideration, with a particular reference to the measures which it may be fitting to adopt, or the language to be held at the meeting of Parliament.

What more can I say to him? Under any circumstances I should doubt the policy of communicating now to Lord Anglesey the resolution of the Government, supposing a resolution to have been formed.

I will return no answer until I hear from you. Under present circumstances I ought to feel a more than ordinary wish to steer clear of everything that can embarrass.

The last sentence, of course, refers to Mr. Peel's intention to resign.

From the Duke of Wellington.

London: Sept. 19, 1828.

I return the letter from the Lord Lieutenant which you gave me to show to the King. I have not shown it to his Majesty because he has been unwell, and I did not see him till yesterday, when I found him too irritable, from illness and the remedies which he was taking, to venture upon such a communication, which would after all have done no good.

In my opinion Lord Anglesey should be desired to call

back to Ireland the Lord Chancellor and the Attorney-General, and to lay before the law officers now in Ireland a statement of the facts which can be proved respecting these assemblies in regular array, these marches by word of command, and this display of flags, and to inquire from them their opinion whether any of these acts or all of them are or are not illegal.

We can determine whether we will act, and how, after having these opinions. In the meantime, we might lay cases upon the same subject before the Attorney and Solicitor General in England.

You might add to these directions to Lord Anglesey the statement that he had already twice stated to you his opinions of the state of affairs in Ireland, that his first letter had been laid before the King and his servants, as would his second and third, as soon as his Majesty should be sufficiently recovered from his present indisposition, and the Cabinet should be reassembled.

To the Duke of Wellington.

(Most private.)

Manchester: Oct. 2, 1828.

I regret the determination to issue the proclamation as the act of the Lord Lieutenant singly. It is calculated to detract from the authority of the proclamation, and I fear it will be considered, what perhaps it is intended to be, a slight to the Privy Council of Ireland.

Nothing can be more foolish than these uncalled-for supersessions of ancient usages in matters of this nature.

It is impossible to say with truth that a Privy Council might not have been assembled. It could have been assembled with at least as much ease and as ample notice as that with which the Chancellor of Ireland was sent to Ireland.

I should have expressed myself to Lord Francis much more strongly if the act were yet undone. After an act is done there is not much use in complaining, and distracting those who are executing it.

From the Duke of Wellington.

Apethorpe : Oct. 5, 1828.

I suspected that Lord Anglesey would not issue the proclamation from the Privy Council. In my opinion it has lost half its effect. It would have been a great object to have had some of the names of the Protestant Privy Councillors attached to this proclamation. But it was quite clear that he was determined to avoid the only mode of carrying the measure into execution which could give us this advantage.

A man must be a great conjurer who can deceive the Irish gentry ; they will know that the proclamation arrived in Ireland on September 28, that the Chancellor arrived in Ireland on the 30th, and that the whole Privy Council might have been assembled with as much ease as the Lord Chancellor was brought over from the Rhine. They will know why this important duty was omitted, and will be more than ever mistrustful of the Government.

On the other hand the other party will be elated, and the good resulting from the proclamation will be diminished in proportion as they will see that a slight was intended for their adversaries.

Oct. 13.—I was at Windsor on Friday, and had a long conversation with the King, or rather listened to a long discourse from him. His Majesty would not listen to my answer, which I have in consequence written to him.

I will tell you, however, that the King is very anxious that Mr. Lawless, and the gentlemen who led the mob in the King's County, and Mr. Steel should be prosecuted by the law officers of the Crown in Ireland. If they cannot be prosecuted, the King is anxious that he should be informed of the reasons.

Oct. 14.—I despatched the messenger on his return to Ireland at ten o'clock this evening, directing him by a route to the Irish road. He will be on that road before the mails from London will pass this night, and he will be in Dublin on Thursday morning, even if he goes by Holyhead. He

expects, however, to embark at Liverpool to-morrow evening at five o'clock. I could have sent him by a shorter road, but he would have got upon the fens, and there has been so much rain that I was apprehensive that he would have been detained, or obliged to turn back.

Oct. 18.—I return the letter from Lord Anglesey. He has now at his disposal every soldier that can be found in the country that is disposable. I desired Byng to send with each considerable detachment two pieces of cannon. This was done. They have in Ireland the means of moving twenty-two or twenty-four pieces, that is to say enough for twelve considerable detachments.

But I will this day send for the gentlemen of the Ordnance, and order over more horses and field pieces if they should be required.

Oct. 19.—I now send you the copy of my letter to the King, which will show you the course of his thoughts as manifested in the audience which I gave for nearly three hours on Friday.

In his letter the Duke submits that to recall Lord Anglesey without reason enough to satisfy the public would be injurious to the King's service; that to call Lord Eldon just at present to his Majesty's councils would be regarded as an indication of a remarkable change in them, which would also be injurious; that to dissolve Parliament, and require candidates to pledge themselves against any concession to Roman Catholics, would cause many inconveniences and evils; that possibly (not to say more) the Roman Catholic tenantry might in a body refuse to pay tithes or rent; and that this would give the rebellion a vast resource of money, of which his Majesty's loyal subjects would have been deprived. For all this the Duke could see no other remedy than that already submitted—namely, 'consideration of the whole state of Ireland.'

Oct. 20.—I understand that the Irish Solicitor-General says that the Association is an illegal assembly at common law. If this be true, the employment of Mr. Lawless upon a mission in the execution of which he has been guilty of

conduct for which he is about to be indicted is an aggravation of their illegal existence.

Can we, then, pass over this existence? Are we not compelled to shut up this Assembly, and to indict it?

I beg you to consider this subject, and to make me acquainted with your opinion. If you agree in my view of the case, desire the Lord Lieutenant to call upon the law officers of the Crown in Ireland to consider of and give their opinion upon the legality of the existence of the Association. The Government will decide upon the policy of proceeding against it.

The tendency of my opinion is that it would be of the greatest advantage to the King's Government to proceed at law against the Association, whatever may be the result of the effort. If the effort succeeds, we shall be masters of the game. If it should fail, Parliament and the country will see what it is they have to deal with.

In the meantime the Government shall not have been guilty of the petty dirty work of attacking an individual when a powerful body avow that he was employed by them. It is much more worthy of the power of the law to attack both.

Oct. 20.—Lord Fitzroy Somerset has just called upon me in consequence of your letter about more troops for Ireland.

In pursuance of former arrangements every disposable soldier in England was put at the disposition of the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland in the end of last month. These consisted of seven battalions of infantry and three regiments of cavalry, one of the battalions being of Guards. Lord Anglesey called to Ireland two of these battalions, and there remain still at his disposition in different parts of the west coast of England five battalions, including one of Guards, and three regiments of cavalry.

He may call for any or all of these on any day he pleases. But it must be observed that they are the last we have disposable. When they go we must call out the militia, and of course call Parliament.

In respect to artillery, I told you the other day that he had the means of moving twenty-two or twenty-five guns. He has in Ireland plenty more guns and artillerymen, and I have desired the Ordnance to send to Ireland one hundred more horses. This will enable him to move, at least, ten more guns.

Oct. 25.—I never pay any attention to anonymous letters in which some fact is not stated capable of proof. But I received one, two or three days ago, from a man professing to have been a soldier who had served, who knew me well, and was now living on his pension in the county of Clare.

He is a Roman Catholic, and he tells me that he knows that the Roman Catholics in that county are so well organised, and the Protestant gentry as well as others are so well watched, as that with the notice of very few hours the whole of them could be seized and massacred.

The man says that he does not dare to sign his name. It is impossible to inquire into the fact, but I am afraid that it is too true.

Oct. 27.—I quite concur with you that the combination at Limerick, not to pay rent &c., and that at Nenagh, are much more important than any murder or active outrage.

Nor. 5.—It appears to me that the Irish Government are very dilatory respecting Mr. O'Gorman Mahon and Mr. Steel, and likewise in answering you respecting the opinion of the law officers about the Roman Catholic Association.

Lord Anglesey and Lord Francis Gower have no notion how much they increase my difficulties with the King by their unwillingness to carry into execution the measures necessary to show that the Government will preserve the peace of the country; by the partiality to everything that is connected with opposition to the Government; and by the company which they keep and the society in which they live in Ireland, such as Lord Cloncurry, Lady

Morgan, &c. I had another message upon the subject from the King two days ago, and I must say that his Majesty is in the right!

I am convinced that matters are in a terrible state in the county of Clare.

Nov. 6.—Is it possible to expect that the gentlemen of Ireland will continue to act as magistrates if this conduct towards them is persevered in? If they have the spirit of men, they must resent it.

Nov. 8.—I am astonished that no notice has yet been taken of the conduct of Mr. Steel, or that of Mr. O’Gorman Mahon. Surely the Irish Government cannot have allowed my Lord Chancellor Hart to remain in ignorance of the conduct of these justices of the peace.

To Lord Francis Gower.

Whitehall: Nov. 14, 1828.

As to seeing Mr. O’Connell, I fairly own to you that if I were the Lord Lieutenant I would not see him. I would receive any communications that he might have to make in writing, and I would act upon those communications, if they required to be acted upon, in precisely the same manner as if they had been received from any other quarter. But I would not, if I were the Lord Lieutenant, receive a man who has been holding the language which that man has been holding within the last two months.

From the Duke of Wellington.

Dec. 6.—I shall be in London on Wednesday, or as much sooner as may be necessary, and shall be ready then to consider and decide upon the measures to be adopted respecting the Roman Catholic Association according to the opinions which we may receive from the Crown lawyers.

We must do what they may advise to be practicable in respect of the Association, be the consequences what they

may. The state of society in Ireland cannot well be worse than it is, civil war not existing.

To the Duke of Wellington.

Whitehall: Dec. 31, 1828.

I should like to have a long conversation with you, and look thoroughly at our position and that of the Government with respect to the Roman Catholic question and Ireland.

Perhaps all matters had better remain *in statu quo* till you come to town.

CHAPTER IV.

1829.

Roman Catholic Relief opposed by Church and King—Peel offers to remain, if necessary—The Duke declares it necessary—The Cabinet unanimous for Concession—The King's Protestant Advisers urge it—Explanations to Friends—Sir Walter Scott casts his Plaid—A daring Pilot in Extremity.

IN the first days of 1829, the year of Roman Catholic Relief, the prospect of effecting any settlement was far from bright.

In the preceding year the Duke of Wellington at one stroke had severed from his Government (see page 46) three Cabinet Ministers and his Irish Secretary. The Lord High Admiral had since resigned, and the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland had been recalled. These six being active supporters of the measure in contemplation, the loss of their help was unfortunate. But in Mr. Peel's view there was a more serious obstacle to action.

From the Memoir.

The chief difficulty was with the King. In his interviews with the Duke of Wellington in the course of the autumn, he had manifested much uneasiness and irritation, and had hitherto shown no disposition to relax the opposition which, of late years at least, he had manifested to the consideration by his Government of the claims of the Roman Catholics. To Lord Eldon he had said 'that, if he gave his assent to the Roman Catholic Relief Bill, he would go to the Baths abroad, and from them to Hanover; that he would return no more to England, and that his subjects might get a Catholic King in the Duke of Clarence.'

He had 'further alleged that Mr. Canning would never, and that he engaged that he would never, allow him to be troubled

about the Roman Catholic question.' On this Sir Robert Peel observes :

There must, no doubt, have been some misapprehension in the King's mind. I feel very confident that Mr. Canning would not have accepted office having entered into any engagement or given any assurances which would have had the effect of placing his Government and himself in that relation to George the Fourth with respect to the Catholic question in which preceding Ministers had stood to George the Third.

There was, however, a general belief that his Majesty had personally given assurances, to the Archbishop of Canterbury and other of the Bishops, that his own opinions on the Catholic question were the same with those of his father, and that it was his determination to resist to the uttermost the repeal of the disabling laws.

In all the communications which I had with his Majesty on this subject, his determination to maintain these laws was most strongly expressed. And the events which were passing in Ireland—the systematic agitation, the intemperate conduct of some of the Roman Catholic leaders, the violent and abusive language of others, the acts of the Association, assuming the functions of Government, and (as it appeared to the King) the passiveness and want of energy in the Irish Executive—irritated his Majesty, and indisposed him the more to recede from his declared resolution to maintain inviolate the existing law.

Moreover, early in January, the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishops of London and Durham informed the Duke of Wellington that 'they could not lend their sanction to the proposed course of proceeding, but must offer a decided opposition.'

It was under pressure of all these adverse forces combined that Mr. Peel at last came to think it necessary to reconsider his opinion, expressed in August 1828, that the originating of the measure in the House of Commons, and the general superintendence of its progress, should be committed to other hands than his.

I now feared that the difficulties were almost insuperable. There was the declared opinion of the King, the declared opinion of the House of Lords, the declared opinion of the Church, unfavourable to the measures we were disposed to recommend.

What I chiefly apprehended was this, that the King, hearing the result of the Duke's conference with the Bishops, would make some public and formal declaration of his resolution to maintain, as a matter of conscience and religious obligation, the excluding laws, and would thus take a position which it might be almost impossible for his Majesty, however urgent the necessity, hereafter to abandon.

I felt convinced that any insuperable impediment suddenly interposed in the way of adjustment, such, for instance, as a fixed and publicly declared resolution of hostility on the part of the Sovereign, would be most injurious to the public welfare, and might preclude the hope of any future settlement—peaceful settlement at least—of the question at issue between England and Ireland.

I could not but perceive, in the course of my constant intercourse with him, that the Duke of Wellington began to despair of success. It had been his constant desire to consult my wishes as to retirement from office, and to avail himself of the offer of my zealous and cordial co-operation in a private capacity. He well knew that there would be nothing in the resignation of office half so painful to my feelings as the separation from him at a period of serious difficulty. From the moment of his appointment to the chief place in the Government not a day had passed without the most unreserved communication personally or in writing, not a point had arisen on which there had not been the most complete and cordial concurrence of opinion.

The period was at hand, on account of the near approach of the meeting of Parliament, when a formal proposal must be made to the King. I was firmly convinced that if the Duke of Wellington should fail, no other public man could succeed in procuring the King's consent and in prevailing

over the opposition to be encountered in the House of Lords.

Being convinced that the Catholic question must be settled, and without delay; being resolved that no act of mine should obstruct or retard its settlement; impressed with the strongest feelings of attachment to the Duke of Wellington, of admiration of his upright conduct and intentions as Prime Minister, of deep interest in the success of an undertaking on which he had entered from the purest motives and from the highest sense of public duty; I determined not to insist upon retirement from office, but to make to the Duke the voluntary offer of that official co-operation which he scrupled, from the influence of kind and considerate feelings, to require from me.

Even after coming to this decision, Mr. Peel so expressed it as to show that, had it been possible, he would fain have been spared the painful duty of taking the lead in passing a measure of which he had been so long the chief opponent. But he resolved to make that sacrifice of personal feeling, 'if absolutely necessary.' And of the necessity he made the Prime Minister the judge.

To the Duke of Wellington.

(Private and confidential.)

Whitehall: Jan. 12, 1829.

Notwithstanding the constant and unreserved intercourse which I have personally had with you in regard to the state of Ireland and the position of the Government with reference to the Catholic question, I have thought it as well to commit to paper the general views which I have from time to time expressed upon those most important subjects.

I still feel that the conclusion at which I have arrived in the accompanying memorandum ought to be followed by my retirement from office.

If I were to remain in office, I might have, and probably should have, to conduct through the House of Commons a measure to which I have been uniformly opposed.

Putting all private consideration out of the question,

should I stand in such a position, in reference either to those who have supported the question or those who have opposed it, as could make it advantageous that the conduct of any measure for the adjustment of the Catholic question should be committed to me? I am bound to tell you that in my opinion I should not.

But I will have no reserve with you.

I know all the difficulties of your situation. I know how those difficulties have recently been increased, as well by the communications which have taken place with the Bishops, as by the necessary recall of Lord Anglesey.

You will do justice to the motives of the declaration which I am about to make, and you will take no advantage of it unless it be absolutely necessary.

If my retirement should prove, in your opinion, after the communications which you may have with the King or with those whom it may be necessary for you to consult, *an insuperable obstacle* to the adoption of the course which, upon the whole, I believe to be the least open to objection, under all the circumstances of the time, in that case you shall command every service that I can render in any capacity.

Enclosed was a memorandum, written for a double purpose, to record Mr. Peel's convictions and to aid the Duke in pressing them upon the King. It may be read in the Memoir. The Prime Minister sent on this paper to the King, then came himself to Whitehall Gardens to deliver his own written answer to the letter.

From the Duke of Wellington.

London: Jan. 17, 1829.

I tell you fairly that I do not see the smallest chance of getting the better of these difficulties if you should not continue in office.

Even if I should be able to obtain the King's consent to enter upon the course which it will probably be found the wisest to adopt—which it is almost certain that I shall not if I should not have your assistance in office—the difficulties

in Parliament will be augmented tenfold in consequence of your secession, while the means of getting the better of them will be diminished in the same proportion.

I entreat you, then, to reconsider the subject, and to give us and the country the benefit of your advice and assistance in this most difficult and important crisis.

This letter left Mr. Peel no option. He had promised, if the Duke should regard his retirement as an insuperable obstacle in the course which they both believed to be the best for the nation, to stay by his side. The Duke had answered that without that help he saw no prospect of success. The die was cast. On the letter stands endorsed :

The Duke of Wellington brought this letter to me. I read it in his presence, and at once told him that I would not press my retirement, but would remain in office, and would propose (with the King's consent) the measures contemplated by the Government for the settlement of the Roman Catholic question.

Forthwith Mr. Peel made known his mind to his colleagues in Cabinet assembled. All approved the course proposed ; two, on returning home, wrote in terms of warmest satisfaction.

From Lord Ellenborough.

Jan. 19, 1829.

I cannot resist telling you how much I admire your conduct to-day. You have adopted a line of conduct dictated, so far as I am capable of forming an opinion, by true statesmanlike wisdom. But I am quite sure you have acted nobly towards the Government, and in a manner which no member of it will ever forget.

From Lord Bathurst.

Jan. 20, 1829.

You must forgive me if I cannot conclude my letter without expressing what I sincerely feel with regard to the course you have taken on this (to you) trying business.

There is no occasion where an honest man's principles are put to so severe a test as when he may consult his ease, and obtain a popular cry in his favour, by quitting the field, instead of standing stoutly up to the conscientious discharge of his duty.

On the Memorandum of January 12 Mr. Peel has written :

The paper, of which this is a copy, was communicated to the King by the Duke of Wellington. The day after its receipt by his Majesty, those of his Ministers who had voted uniformly against the Catholic claims had each a separate interview with his Majesty, and expressed opinions in general conformity with those expressed in this paper. The Ministers were the Duke of Wellington, the Chancellor, Lord Bathurst, Mr. Goulburn, Mr. Herries, Mr. Peel.

The King, after this interview, intimated his consent that the Cabinet should consider the whole state of Ireland, and submit their views to his Majesty, his Majesty being by such consent in no degree pledged to the adoption of the views of his Government, even if it should concur unanimously in the course to be pursued.

On receiving the King's qualified consent, Mr. Peel wrote to the Chief Secretary for Ireland.

To Lord Francis Gower.

(Most private.)

Whitehall : Jan. 17, 1829.

On Thursday last the King's Protestant advisers went to Windsor, and had each a separate interview with his Majesty, in the course of which each declared his opinion &c. as above.

His Majesty assented so far as to permit the whole state of Ireland to be taken into consideration by the Government, he reserving to himself to determine how far he will listen to any advice they might offer. He did not pledge himself to anything, but he consented to break down the barrier which has hitherto prevented the discussion of the Catholic question in the Cabinet as a measure of Government.

Previously to an interview with his Majesty, I sent to him a memorandum, in which I reviewed the proceedings of Parliament in reference to the Catholic question for some years past. The following were the main conclusions at which I arrived in that paper.

First, that it is not advisable that the Government should remain on its present footing, professing neutrality on a question on which all other parties are pronouncing a positive opinion.

Secondly, that the time is come when a Government ought to be so formed as to do one or other of two things, either to resist the question with the united force of Government on permanent grounds, or to undertake to consider the question with a view, not to precipitate ill-considered concession, but to some safe and satisfactory settlement of it.

Thirdly, that I could not advise, nor be a party to the former course, from a firm conviction that it would fail, that its failure would be prejudicial to the country generally, and above all would diminish the chance of any safe adjustment of the Roman Catholic claims.

Fourthly, that my advice to his Majesty must therefore be, so to constitute this Government as to permit the whole state of Ireland, including the Catholic question, to be discussed on the same principles on which any other great question of State policy may be discussed.

I have before apprised you of the sort of qualified consent given by the King to this course.

There are many other matters, commencing with a period very shortly after the termination of the Session, all which you shall hear from me. From that period I must say that everything has been done by the Duke to smooth the extreme difficulties that were in his way.

There is one point to which I wish that you would give immediate and most serious consideration. You must, however, for the present look upon all that I have written to you above as communicated in the strictest confidence to yourself personally.

It will probably be indispensably necessary, as a preliminary to any measure respecting the Catholic question, to put down the Catholic Association by law. On this you must confer with the law officers. But enjoin the utmost secrecy to them as to even this branch of the subject being in contemplation. The other is for yourself alone.

From Lord Francis Gower.

Dublin : Jan. 19, 1829.

I have just received your confidential letter of the 17th. I read it, as you may conceive, with an interest and satisfaction on which I cannot at present dilate. You may depend on the secrecy and zeal with which I shall proceed to execute the important commission which it entrusts to me.

Parliament being called for February 6, less than three weeks remained to prepare three measures, 'for the suppression of the Roman Catholic Association, the repeal of the disabling laws, and the regulation of the elective franchise.'

A memorandum in which Mr. Peel submitted for consideration the principles involved in the chief measure is given in full in the Memoir. It is dated on January 17, the day that he consented to remain in office.

He recommended a general repeal of civil incapacities. The broad principle should be equality of civil privilege, though it might be expedient to except, as in the Bills brought in by Grattan and others, offices connected with the Established Church, the Universities and Church Schools, the offices of Lord Chancellor in England and Ireland, and of Lord Lieutenant of Ireland. He had sketched the form of oath afterwards adopted. And he advised against including in the Bill pecuniary provision for the Roman Catholic clergy.

Referring to three criticisms often urged—that there ought to have been endowment of priests and bishops; that suppression of the Association was a needless parade of vigour; and that the Cabinet were to blame for refusing to Mr. O'Connell the benefit of his recent election—Sir Robert Peel, while accepting his full share of responsibility, appeals to critics to remember

the practical difficulties that beset the accomplishment of the main object.

We were about to forfeit the confidence and encounter the hostility of a very great portion of our own party. The principle of concession had been affirmed by the House of Commons, on the last discussion, by the very smallest majority, 272 to 266. It had been negatived in the House of Lords by a majority of 40. The King was hostile, the Church was hostile, a majority probably of the people of Great Britain was hostile, to concession.

It was not, as was imputed, from paltry jealousy or personal pique that we resolved not to permit Mr. O'Connell to take his seat for Clare on an election which had taken place previously to the passing of the Relief Act. It was not from insensibility to the importance of establishing some bond of connection between the Roman Catholic clergy and the State, that a provision for their maintenance formed no part of our plan. The refusal in the one case and the omission in the other were deliberate acts, determined on in the sincere belief that, in different degrees and for different reasons, they were important to the ultimate success of the undertaking.

Anxious above all things to settle the question without civil war, and knowing the strength of the opposition which they must either propitiate or overcome, the Cabinet refrained from loading their Bill with provisions either for endowment of Roman Catholics, or for relieving the chief agitator, who under the new law could be returned without a contest.

Even with this forbearance, the King, who hated O'Connell, so late as on March 3 (see the Memoir) refused leave to proceed, but in the end gave way.

The King's speech on February 3 contained enough to indicate the general intention of Ministers, and set Mr. Peel free to communicate on the subject with his family and friends. Two friends, whose probable censure he was particularly desirous to avert—the Under Secretary and the Attorney-General of his time in Ireland—had even before this received from him a confidential explanation.

To Mr. Gregory.

Feb. 1, 1829.

Overwhelmed as I am with business, I must write you a few lines.

Nothing should have induced me to return to the King's service but the peculiar circumstances under which the country was placed on the breaking up of Lord Goderich's Administration on the eve of the meeting of Parliament—I mean, nothing should have induced me to return to it, the Catholic question remaining in the state in which it was. However, I had no option under these circumstances, and did not hesitate to return.

I was left in a minority on the Catholic question in the course of the Session.

When all the business of Parliament was over, I signified to the Duke of Wellington an opinion, in which he entirely concurred, that matters could not remain as they were; that it was discreditable to the Government, and dangerous to the Protestant interest, and prejudicial in every way to the country, to continue with a divided Government on the Catholic question, with a divided Legislature, with a majority in the House of Commons voting for the Roman Catholics year after year.

I intimated to him that the time was come for me to retire; that to form an exclusive Protestant Government out of such materials as the House of Commons afforded, and in the face of 272 members opposed to the principle of such a Government, would fail, and would deliver up the Government at once into the hands of those who would settle the Catholic question under circumstances most disadvantageous to the Protestant interest and to the country; that to dissolve Parliament, and to permit the Roman Catholic Association to send fifty or sixty Radicals from Ireland, ousting the gentry of the country, would be a fatal measure.

I told the Duke that I was so sensible of the present evils arising out of a divided Administration, that I would

in a private capacity support any course with respect to Ireland which a Government headed by him could suggest.

As the meeting of Parliament drew near, we were compelled to decide on the course which should be pursued.

My opinion was that to meet Parliament saying nothing about Ireland, professing entire contentment with the state of things, and having nothing to propose, would be discreditable to us, and would ensure the speedy downfall of the Government; that to propose measures of restriction, the Government being divided and remaining neutral on the Catholic question, could not succeed in the face of an absolute majority of the House of Commons, which had last Session voted for another course of proceeding; that to propose such a measure, and to fail, would be a serious injury to the best interests of the country. The Protestant Ministers of the Crown—the Duke, Goulburn, Herries, Lord Bathurst, and myself, came to the same conclusions. There was but one alternative—to advise the King to permit his Government to consider the whole state of Ireland, and to attempt to make some safe and satisfactory settlement, excluding nothing from their view.

In the course of the discussion my own position in the Government occupied a prominent place. The King called upon us for our advice, and he had a right to call upon us. The question at last resolved itself into this—the question which I had to decide for myself.

I cannot let things remain as they are, that is, I mean, let a disunited Government, having neither concession nor restraint to propose, meet Parliament. I cannot advise the dissolution of the present Government, and the attempt to form an exclusive Protestant Government; from the perfect conviction that it will fail. Will I advise the King to take the only remaining course, I myself shrinking from the sacrifices and responsibility that it entails? Or will I remain in my post, setting an example of sacrifice to others, and abiding for myself the issue, be it what it may?

I have chosen the last alternative, painful as it is to me. I may be wrong, but at any rate I am prepared to make

sacrifices which will prove that I think I am right. I have felt it my duty to tender my immediate resignation of my seat to the University of Oxford, if they shall think fit to accept it.

This letter is written in the strictest confidence to yourself, but I beg that you will communicate it, under injunctions of entire secrecy, to Saurin. I doubt whether we shall not find a very prevalent impression among Protestants that anything whatever is preferable to continued disunion and neutrality.

The answer to this letter is a good example of the reception Mr. Peel's change met with from some of his most devoted friends.

From Mr. Gregory.

Dublin: Feb. 4, 1829.

My dear Peel,—Your letter has overwhelmed me with surprise and dismay. It is an event for which I was not prepared, and I must have more time to collect my scattered senses, and weigh calmly all the difficulties you have stated, before I can give an opinion on the course you have adopted, and say that I approve of what you have done.

That you have been influenced by the purest motives it is impossible for me to doubt; that you are making great sacrifices of everything dear to your honourable ambition is evident. Yet, under the strong influence of the feelings with which I at present write, I do not think this is the time you should yield to the demands of menacing rebels; they should first be subdued.

But I will not venture to write more at present. Believe me, I feel sincerely the continued confidence you place in me, and, though we may differ in opinion on the line you have adopted, I shall always remain, my dear Peel,

Yours most affectionately,

W. GREGORY.

A few days later Mr. Gregory condemned the new policy in stronger terms.

*Mr. Goulburn to Mr. Gregory.**(Private and confidential.)*

Downing Street : Feb. 5. 1829.

It has been a choice between tremendous difficulties. God grant that we may have taken the right course !

If you cannot agree in my decision, at least give me credit for honesty of intention, and a desire to do what was best for the country.

Mr. Gregory to Mr. Goulburn.

Dublin : Feb. 9, 1829.

I regret deeply what has occurred, and though I express myself strongly, yet I should act basely in my own estimation if I affected an acquiescence in a measure of which I so highly disapprove.

After the King's Speech, letters were exchanged with a warm parliamentary supporter.

From Lord Hotham.

Feb. 6, 1829.

The extraordinary and unexpected situation in which, in common with many of the most constant and most determined supporters of the Government, I find myself placed by the King's Speech of yesterday, must be my excuse for now trespassing on your time.

At the breaking up of Lord Liverpool's Administration in 1827, I endeavoured to be one of the first to assure you of the readiness with which I should follow your fortunes, and that I should support you as strenuously when out of office as if holding a high station in the King's councils.

On the present occasion, however, I regret deeply that I have a different communication to make to you. The high opinion which I entertain of your judgment, and a thorough conviction of your integrity, would induce me to make no small sacrifices in order to concur in the same course of action with you ; but the point at issue is too momentous to justify the surrender of a deliberately formed and still unshaken opinion to personal considerations of any kind.

I know not, and it is not my present purpose to inquire, what are the precise steps to be taken by the Government with reference to the state of Ireland. But if it is to be your duty to bring forward a Bill or Bills similar to those against which we have hitherto always contended, a sense of what is due to my own honour and conscience—for I am perfectly free from all electioneering engagements, and have no constituents to consult—will compel me to find myself opposed to you on every stage of such proceedings.

I think I may venture to flatter myself that you will not misinterpret the object of this communication. It is intended to explain to you frankly and fairly, and without wishing to consult or confer with others, the course which it will be my imperious duty to pursue; to assure you—although that can hardly be necessary—that upon other subjects I have no idea of acting otherwise than I have hitherto done; and further, to express my sanguine hope that, although until this unfortunate question be disposed of I may frequently be obliged to decide against you, yet that this circumstance may not interfere with the friendship or interrupt the good understanding which has so long existed between us.

To Lord Hotham.

(Most private and confidential).

Whitehall: Feb. 7, 1829.

I am not surprised at the letter which you have had the kindness to write to me. I say the kindness, whatever declarations of opposition it may contain, because it enables me to cherish the hope that our present friendship—an object of much greater concern to me than any political considerations—will remain unaffected by any difference of our course of action.

I feel the justice of every observation you make with respect to the course you must take. Bear in mind the difference of our positions. I was left in the minority last Session in the House of Commons on a question deeply affecting the tranquillity of Ireland. On one thing my mind was made up. I would not for any consideration

remain responsible for the good government of Ireland, my opinions being opposed to those of a majority of the House of Commons, and the Government being divided. This was utterly impossible, impossible for myself, impossible as respects the peace of the country. I pressed my retirement when the Session closed, but Ireland soon after seemed on the eve of explosion. No man can retire in the face of immediate peril, and I remained in office until it was put down by the demonstration of force.

It became necessary to recall Lord Anglesey. I was obliged to take my full share of the responsibility of that recall. I could not with honour free myself from the obligations of office until it became necessary to advise the King what course he should pursue at the meeting of Parliament. I was called on for my advice, and I gave it according to my deliberate conviction, that neutrality would be ridiculous, and disgraceful, and dangerous, and that the dissolution of the present Government and the formation of an exclusive uncompromising Protestant one was impracticable.

From Lord Hotham.

Feb. 8, 1829.

Two or three friendly lines would have completely satisfied me, and I am therefore the more gratified and flattered by the long and interesting letter which you have been good enough to send me.

I lament—deeply lament—the necessity which will compel me to take the course I have announced to you, a course, however, from which a strong sense of duty will not allow me to escape. Nothing but a call so imperious should induce me to be opposed to you on this occasion, for I know the sacrifice you have made, and honour the motive by which you have been influenced.

What others may do I know not, but from me you will not have a syllable of reproach. And if, during the discussions to which we must look forward, any violence or acrimony should show itself among those with whom I may

be found voting, I beg you to believe that I shall be no participator in such proceedings.

I cannot, it is true, consent to abandon the strong and deliberate conviction of my own mind to any extent of private feeling; but I shall be more than ever cautious to avoid anything likely to give a moment's pain to one for whom I shall always have the highest esteem and regard.

Mr. Peel also wrote an explanation to his aged father, from whom, though not easily to be converted to Catholic Relief, he obtained a reassuring answer.

To Sir Robert Peel.

Whitehall: Feb. 7, 1829.

I have been so oppressed with business and with anxiety for the last four days, that I have been unable to write to you.

I have been placed in a situation of great difficulty, in which I have little consolation except the consciousness that I have acted for the best, and that I have preferred to make any sacrifice rather than desert my post in a time of great public embarrassment.

When last Session closed, I was in this situation, leader of the House of Commons, having a majority against me on the Catholic question, Ireland on the brink of civil commotion, and the Government divided on the great question which agitates that country.

My mind was made up that this state of things could not continue; that it was not tolerable that men should remain in the position in which Lord Anglesey, Lord Francis Gower, and I were placed, pretending to govern a country in a state of distraction like Ireland, and yet differing as we differed on the cause and the cure of the agitation.

I therefore informed the Duke of Wellington in August last that I saw no evil so great as disunion in the Cabinet and the Government of Ireland. I offered to make any

personal sacrifice to prevent the continuance of that disunion.

Difficulties continued to increase ; it became necessary to recall Lord Anglesey, and to decide on the future course with respect to Ireland.

My advice to his Majesty was above all things to abolish disunion in his Cabinet, and to allow the whole state of Ireland to be considered by a united Government. My opinion also was that to form a united Government offering permanent resistance to the Catholic question in the present state of the opinions of public men, and in the face of a majority of the House of Commons, was impracticable.

At length, after various discussions, the question came to this. Would I abandon the King's service, refusing myself to take the course which I advised his Majesty to take ?

I answered that I would not abandon my post, be the consequences what they might.

While I have made this painful sacrifice to a sense of public duty, I have thought it right to relieve myself from engagements which I had contracted under a different state of things. I have signified to the University of Oxford that I should replace in their hands the trust which they had confided to me.

From Sir Robert Peel.

Drayton : Feb. 8, 1829.

My dear Robert,—Though in the country we see through a glass darkly, I have not lately been blind to the difficulties of your unhappy situation, and have found myself but ill able, with an impaired constitution, to contemplate the peculiarity of your position without great uneasiness.

In the present distracted state of Ireland, with a people under the dominion of the worst party feelings, generated and nursed by governors unfriendly to our constitution, I fear your last concession will only embolden resistance and tend to widen the breach it is intended by the Government to close.

I trust the consciousness of your having acted for the

best will sustain you in every change of circumstances, and enable you to cherish new friendships, without inflicting a wound on old ones. Some of your constituents may be pleased with your offer to resign your situation as one of the representatives of the University, and boast that the Protestant cause has sustained a shock by the retirement of an able advocate. As a friend to the good old cause, I trust the University will not dispense with a connection which you have ever considered as highly honourable.

I could say more, but am unwilling to withdraw your attention from subjects of more importance. With unabated attachment, I am, my dear Robert,

Your affectionate father,

ROBERT PEEL.

A note from another relative, describing the physical effect of the news of Mr. Peel's conversion on an old friend, for whom he had the highest esteem, drew from him further explanations, in which all doubts as to the duty of remaining in office to carry the Bill seem to have disappeared.

From Colonel Yates.

Manchester : Feb. 17, 1829.

I have been here two or three days, and the public mind begins to be a little more tranquillised on the subject of the new changes. The Boltoners are, however, still very indignant, and it is really the fact that Hulton took on so that the physician bled him and put him to bed.

When you know that you are acting right, I am sure a temporary sacrifice of popularity has no effect on your resolves, and I heartily wish you well through your arduous task.

To Colonel Yates.

Whitehall : Feb. 18, 1829.

I am very much obliged to you for your letter.

I never took any step in public life with which I was so entirely satisfied as I am with that which I lately took.

The events of the Clare election, with the conviction that the same scenes would be acted in nearly every county in Ireland if matters were to remain just as they have been for the last five or six years, convinced me that it was not safe for the Protestant interest in Ireland that they should remain so.

I gave that opinion, and I gave also another opinion, that to attempt measures of restriction and control for Ireland without any prospect of settling the Catholic question might be right, but they could not be carried through a House of Commons constituted like the present. A dissolution of Parliament in the present state of the elective franchise in Ireland would ensure the return of sixty or seventy Radicals.

These were my opinions. The meeting of Parliament approached. Lord Anglesey had been recalled. The whole question resolved itself into this—Would I abide by my opinions on the present state of affairs, or would I not? Would I leave others to contend with difficulties which I refused to face? Would I advise the King to swallow a bitter pill, at which I made faces myself? There surely cannot be a doubt as to the course which a man *ought* to take under such circumstances.

Depend upon it, no man will suffer ultimately by being abused for doing that which is right, but the bitterest of all positions is the popularity which a man purchases at the expense of his own conscience, and which in his own heart he knows to be undeserved.

From his brother-in-law came a letter expressing warm approval, and adding an interesting account of the conflict in old Sir Robert's mind, between parental zeal for his son's interests and some tendency to be affected by the virulence of newspapers which formed the staple of his daily reading.

From Dean Cockburn.

Drayton Tuesday [Feb. 24, 1829].

Your conduct on the present important occasion has met from the first with my complete approbation.

The same arguments which you have used to the Bishop of Limerick [see Memoir, i. 360] I have used to all those who have differed from me on the subject, and I am happy to perceive that a little reflection has produced on the public mind that effect which it usually does produce in England. It has made all the rational part of the community unite in applauding a measure which has been dictated by prudence and good sense.

Sir Robert and I have had many discussions on the subject, and I think that his disapprobation is mostly confined to an occasional jest. As soon as it was known that there was no objection to our canvassing the voters in this neighbourhood to assure your re-election at Oxford, Sir Robert was quite as eager as I was to assist in the good work. The carriage was instantly ordered. He went with me to Clifton and to Thorpe, joined with me in arguing the point with Mr. Inge, who at first pretended to see objections to your conduct, but who ultimately promised to go to Oxford in your behalf.

Sir Robert also applied to Mr. Gresley, and went with me to Lichfield to seek for voters there, and in short exhibited as much hearty zeal in the cause as it was possible for man to show.

He reads unfortunately nothing but violent papers on the other side, the 'Age,' the 'Standard,' and the 'Morning Post'—I wish they could be gradually withdrawn or changed—and his mind is not firm enough to despise the low ribaldry with which you are assailed. He constantly admits that what you have done is best for the country and for the Church, but doubts (which no one ought) whether such conduct is best for yourself.

I have read to him the two letters you enclosed, and he seems well satisfied with them, and evidently pleased that you take so much trouble to obtain his approbation.

From the various communications I have received, I have no doubt of your re-election for Oxford, and if that re-election takes place you may rest assured that Sir Robert's doubts and objections will be at an end.

A letter of congratulation from Sir Walter Scott is of special interest as narrating how his own Conservative mind, moving on much the same lines as Mr. Peel's, had reached the same conclusions.

From Sir Walter Scott.

Abbotsford: March 1, 1829.

At the risk of being thought an unauthorised intruder, I cannot but offer you my sincere congratulations on having so nearly removed the great Catholic stumbling-block.

I have never seen a question on which it was more difficult for honest men to make their opinions.

When I went to Ireland three years since I was a pretty stiff anti-Catholic. But as I made a long tour there, and saw all sorts of people, I came to think concessions essential to the peace and prosperity of the country, without which a rankling source of civil discord was like to prevail for ever.

Afterwards, when the Catholic Association raised its head, like the Snake God in Southey's 'Madoc,' and cried, 'Give, give, or I will take,' I did not like its style of expostulation, and was disposed to return to my former opinions. But looking more maturely at the nature of the contest, and the kindred hands which were perhaps to be dyed in each other's blood, I came to think that, as the beginning of strife is like the letting out of water, we should prevent, by doing the utmost in our power and by granting all that could be granted, that worst of evils, a civil war.

The patriotism of Mr. Peel, who laid aside a thousand personal considerations of the most interesting nature, and exposed himself to the calumny of so many envenomed tongues and pens, must be valued by every man who can appreciate duly the remonstrance of Themistocles: 'Strike, but hear.' And no man in his senses would suppose the Duke of Wellington a party to counsels by which national honour was to be hurt or endangered. And so I and a

great number more worthy cast our plaids, and stood up to show face, which I am glad to see has been of some use.

I certainly rest in unrest, for I am far from thinking the evils of Ireland are thus to be ended, as by a stroke of magic. But the proprietors will obtain a fair pretext for detaching themselves from the agitators, with whom they have been hitherto compelled to associate. In fact military force applied to Ireland is only fostering the evil spirit it is designed to suppress. The Irish care not for the suffering from which another species of commonalty would altogether recoil; they have nothing to lose but life, and though they have equally little to gain, fighting itself is an excitation to them. But if temporary quiet can be gained, it is to be hoped that their landholders will return, and that part of the superfluous capital of England will find its way into a channel which, unless obstructed by foreign obstacles, would afford abundant returns. In fact the country has already greatly improved since the Union, and that improvement, though not perceptible in its progress, is very evident when we look back on the period.

May you, my dear sir, live to see the full harvest of which you have had the courage to sow the seed, and excuse this long and perhaps impertinent letter from

Your most sincere and respectful humble servant,

WALTER SCOTT.

After all, Ireland will be better off than poor Scotland. Our Union was made in 1707, and it was not till 1780 that her inhabitants drew any other advantage from it than three rebellions—rather bitter fruits of a consolidating treaty.

Mr. Peel's answer seems to have been delayed till he had occasion to write on other subjects. His last sentence, on Southey's portrait, touches with a light hand the onslaughts of one of his assailants.

To Sir Walter Scott.

Whitehall : April 3, 1829.

My dear Sir Walter,—I shall be most happy in availing myself of any opportunity that may offer of encouraging literature in Scotland, and particularly in the Church of Scotland, by the preferment of Mr. McKay. I have one young man on my list for whom I am anxious exclusively on that ground to provide, a Mr. Patterson, whose prize essay on a classical subject I read with very great pleasure.

In truth, however, according to the existing usage, the Crown has no Church patronage in Scotland, and I doubt much if the real interests of that Church are promoted by the servile deference that it has been the custom to pay to the wishes of ignorant or interested heritors.

Sometimes they are good enough to squabble amongst themselves, and then I step in with a third candidate, to the confusion of the contending parties.

I am sorry to say, however, that they have found me out, and that they generally contrive to reconcile their differences before the day of nomination arrives.

Who would have guessed that I should be the bearer of the Roman Catholic Relief Bill to the House of Lords? However, it was necessary.

I wish you had been present at the Clare election, for no pen but yours could have done justice to that fearful exhibition of sobered and desperate enthusiasm. ‘Be true’ was the watchword which, uttered by a priest or an agitator, calmed in an instant ‘the stormy wave of the multitude,’ and seduced the freeholder from his allegiance to his Protestant landlord.

We were watching the movements of tens of thousands of disciplined fanatics, abstaining from every excess and every indulgence, and concentrating every passion and feeling on one single object; with hundreds of police and soldiers, half of whom were Roman Catholics—that half, faithful and prepared, I have no doubt, to do their duty. But is it consistent with common prudence and common

sense to repeat such scenes, and to incur such risks of contagion ?

I knew too much to make it possible for me to take any other course than that which I have taken. The time is past when either party can coquet any longer with the Catholic question.

Hic locus est, partes ubi se via findit in ambas.

God grant that

Hâc iter Elysium nobis.

You will think I am now mad on the Catholic question. Your name was of the utmost value, and had more weight than any other single name. The mention of it, as attached to the Edinburgh petition, was received with loud cheers.

What am I to do about your picture, which I must place in my gallery of contemporary portraits by Sir Thomas Lawrence ?

I want it more than ever, for he has just finished for me a portrait of Southey, and he is scowling vengeance at me for my apostasy, and so forth.

Ever yours,

ROBERT PEEL.

From two of the King's brothers the step taken by Mr. Peel received warm approval.

From the Duke of Clarence.

St. James' Place : March 4, 1829.

Dear Sir,—I have received yours of this day, and can assure you, both on public and private grounds, I lament the event of the election at the University of Oxford. I shall be most anxious to read with attention the account of the poll, to see the resources employed against you, acting honourably and conscientiously, like a statesman, for the King and the Empire.

Being now on this subject, I cannot but throw out, for your consideration and that of the Duke of Wellington, the

absolute propriety of hinting to the bishops that translation depends on their conduct through this measure.

My best and kindest regards to Mrs. Peel, and ever believe me, dear sir,

Yours truly,

WILLIAM.

From the Duke of Sussex.

The Duke of Sussex takes this opportunity of expressing to Mr. Peel, in common with all his fellow subjects who are well-wishers to their country's prosperity and tranquillity, his gratitude and admiration of his honourable, firm, and upright conduct on the late important occasion.

Kensington Palace : Thursday afternoon [April 16, 1829].

Of Mr. Peel's motives for resigning his seat for Oxford, and of the contest which ensued there, a full account is given in the Memoir. It may be supplemented by a letter from the Principal of Alban Hall, afterwards Archbishop of Dublin.

From Dr. Whately.

Alban Hall : March 1829.

There are a few persons in Oxford endeavouring to represent our failure as involving a greater loss of credit to yourself and the University than would have ensued if we had not brought you forward. But all those whose judgment I most prize concur in thinking that the result has been beneficial.

Had you not been brought forward, that would have been generally believed which, as it was, several so boldly maintained as to gain considerable credence; that the University, with very few exceptions, regarded you as unworthy of confidence, had utterly forgotten your long services, were indifferent on all subjects except the Catholic question, and were resolved to oppose concessions to the last, even at the risk of civil war.

I need not expatiate on the disgrace and mischief which

would have ensued had such an opinion gone abroad. That Oxford should proclaim the maxim, and act on it, that it is indelible infamy to a public man to adopt (even as the less of two evils, or on whatever emergency) a measure he has formerly disapproved, could not but be both discreditable and dangerous. And still worse would it have been for Oxford, herself the representative in great measure of a large portion of the educated classes, to appear to countenance the clamour now raised against the whole Legislature.

I know not how far popular feeling may have been excited to a seditious extent, but I feel sure that nothing could have more inflamed it than a persuasion that the University are on the side of the mob. And that is the impression which would have been produced on the public mind had you been either left in a contemptible minority or never proposed.

How different is the result! The majority is not quite five to four (if the pairs-off were included, about six to five), and it is hardly invidious to say that the minority, which is so near a numerical half, is notoriously and palpably much more than half in everything else.

It would be indelicate to advert to the character and reputation of individuals. But here is a palpable, undeniable, in short producible specimen of the proofs that might be offered; of nineteen professors who voted we had thirteen, and of forty members of Parliament thirty-eight. After this few will talk of the *sense* of the University being against you, if at least they have any sense of their own.

I will only add that several persons have already expressed regret for the result to which they had contributed, plainly showing what would be the effect of an appeal from Oxford under the influence of sudden passion to Oxford sober.

To Dr. Whately.

March 2, 1829.

I entirely concur in all your observations. I am confident that if there had been no contest everyone would

have declared that my election would have been secure. Everyone would have blamed the indifference of a powerful party in the University in not proposing me, or my want of respect to the University, and want of firmness in not risking the issue of an appeal. So far as personal feelings are concerned, mine are abundantly gratified by the character and quality of the support given to me.

Before vacating his seat at Oxford, Mr. Peel conducted through the House his Bill for suppressing the Catholic Association. The leader of the Opposition desired that this measure should be passed quietly, with a view to securing the other.

From Mr. Arbuthnot.

(Private.)

Whitehall Place : Feb. 10, 1829.

Lord Althorp begged me to mention to you that he and many of his friends cared very little what might be said by you against the Association, but as there were many fiery and violent spirits among them, particularly from Ireland, it was thought very desirable that in proposing your measure to the House, there should not be much said which would be likely to excite angry discussion. He conceived, he added, that everything was of minor importance to the removal of civil disabilities, and that it was wished therefore to pass the first Bill quickly and temperately in order to secure the second Bill before the House without giving time for the excitement throughout England with which we are threatened.

As I was leaving the House, Brougham held to me nearly the same language. He said also that his first notion had been that it might have been as well, and certainly more satisfactory to yourself, if you had supported the measure for concession out of office, but he had since been convinced of his error, and was now fully aware that without your aid and efforts in office the whole must have failed.

He went on to laud you and the Duke up to the skies,

and observed that, with this measure on the one hand, and the rigid economy now practising on the other, the Government could have nothing to apprehend.

The Suppression Bill passed without a division. The 'Disfranchisement Bill'—as in his speech Mr. Peel frankly called it—was opposed by a minority of only seventeen. These two Bills were, in fact, what were called on a former occasion the 'wings' of the chief measure.

It being necessary that Mr. Peel should in some way find a seat in Parliament, this was effected by the resignation of a supporter. The bye-election which ensued, though for a pocket borough, and therefore little more than a ceremony, gave a sample of what a general election might have been.

From the Memoir.

After my rejection by the University, there being a convenient vacancy for Westbury, I became a candidate—a very unpopular one, I must admit—for that borough. The Protestant feeling was much excited, even among the quiet population of a small country town, and notwithstanding all the assistance which Sir Manasseh Lopez, the patron of the borough [and also the retiring member], could render me, my return was not effected without considerable difficulty.

Sir Manasseh himself suffered in person from one of the many missiles with which the Town Hall was assailed during the ceremony of the election. It was fortunate for me that that ceremony was not unduly protracted. Very shortly after my return had been declared by the proper officer, the arrival of a Protestant candidate in a chaise and four from London was announced. If he had entered the town a few hours earlier, it is highly probable that I should have fared no better at Westbury than I did at Oxford.

On the Relief Bill the debates in the House of Commons began and ended in March. On the second reading Mr. Peel

made clear the view he took. He did not recommend concession on the high ground of abstract justice. Nor would he forecast its practical result. He was content to argue that of two evils it was the less.

Briefly, but with emotion, he referred to the sacrifice he had made of private feeling to public duty, as painful in the extreme.

'Tis said with ease, but oh ! how hardly tried
By haughty souls to human honour tied.
Oh ! sharp convulsive pangs of agonising pride !
(DRYDEN, *Hind and Panther*, iii. 287.)

Turning from this, he reviewed the course of the Catholic question for five-and-thirty years. He discussed in public, as before in confidential papers, the possible alternatives, dwelling on the risks in Ireland of a general election on this religious question, owing to Pitt's lavish grant of the franchise there in 1793.

He then explained the measure, and prayed the House above all things to be thorough. 'If we are to relinquish the system of exclusion, let us secure the advantages of concession ; if we are to settle the Catholic question, let us settle it at once, and for ever.'

As regards securities, he repudiated the 'Veto' on Catholic appointments, which had wrecked Grattan's Bill,¹ and relied rather on cancelling the franchise which had made the forty-shilling freeholders the instruments at one time of their landlords, at another of their priests, and in either case arbiters of the county elections.

In closing this debate, he modestly disclaimed all credit offered to him for settling the question. The credit, he said, belonged to Fox, to Grattan, to Plunket, and to Canning.

On the third reading, attacked for abandoning his old position on the Protestant side, he replied with dignity, laying down the broad principle that, in this as in other questions, he would not purchase support by promising to adhere, at all times, and at all hazards, to arguments and opinions once propounded. A pilot,

¹ Grattan's Bill, O'Connell had described as 'rascally.' 'Peel's Bill,' he wrote, 'is good—very good; frank, direct, complete; no veto, no control, no payment of clergy.'—Fitzpatrick's *O'Connell*, i. 174.

to guard the ship from danger, should not steer always the same course. His defence was that of all statesmen, at all times, and in all countries :

‘Non semper easdem sententias ab iisdem, sed quascunque reipublicæ status, inclinatio temporum, ratio concordiæ postulant, esse defendendas.’ (Cicero, ‘Pro Plancio,’ c. 39.)

The Bill had been opposed by the Attorney-General, Wetherall (with such violence that the Duke of Wellington dismissed him for it), by Lord Lonsdale’s five members, and by many of the old Protestant party. Among these Sir Robert Inglis, with all the weight attaching to his representation of the numerical majority at the University of Oxford, undertook to answer Mr. Peel. His brother also (afterwards General Peel) argued, in moderate terms, in favour of referring the question to the country.

The majority of the House warmly approved the new policy. On the second reading the number for concession rose from 272 (in the preceding year) to 348; the number opposing fell from 266 to 160. In the Lords also the second reading was carried by nearly two to one. In the minority voted but one Irish prelate, the Primate.

The ship was in port, but the storm did not cease to rage. The Memoir continues :

As I must naturally have foreseen, the course which I felt it my duty to take in advising the adjustment of the Catholic question, in standing forward as the proposer of the measures of the Government to Parliament, and the conductor of them to their final stage in the House of Commons, exposed me to the condemnation of those who remained unconvinced of the necessity or policy of these measures.

Such condemnation assumed every form, and varied in every degree, from friendly expostulation and the temperate expression of conscientious dissent to the most violent abuse, and the imputation of the basest motives.

Opponents who would listen to argument I sought to mollify by respectful explanation. I let pass without notice the calumnies which were prompted by a zeal too

fervent to be accessible to reason, and too uncharitable to believe in the possibility of an honest intention.

Sir Robert Peel goes on to refer in modest terms to an adverse judgment which he felt more justly might have been, and which now sometimes is passed upon him, but which then was less in question.

If it had been alleged against me that the sudden adoption of a different policy had proved the want of early sagacity and forethought on my part—if the charge had been that I had adhered with too much pertinacity to a hopeless cause, that I had permitted for too long a period the engagements of party, or undue deference to the wishes of constituents, to outweigh the accumulating evidence of an approaching necessity—if this had been the accusation against me, I might find it more difficult to give it a complete and decisive refutation.

But the charge preferred by those whose favour and goodwill I had forfeited was the opposite of this; it was that I had without any sufficient reason, nay that I had from pusillanimous and unworthy motives, counselled the abandonment of resistance, which it would have been easy, as well as wise, to continue unabated.

I must leave it to others to determine, after weighing the evidence which I have adduced, and that additional evidence to which the lapse of time will no doubt give access, whether, at the period when concession was determined on, the reasons in favour of concession, as opposed to continued and uncompromising resistance, did or did not preponderate.

Of my own motives and intentions I may be allowed to speak.

Pusillanimity—the want of moral courage—would have prompted a very different course from that which I pursued. If I had been swayed by any unworthy fears—the fear of obloquy, the fear of responsibility, the fear of parliamentary conflict—I might have concealed my real opinion, might have sheltered myself under the dishonest plea of a false

consistency, and have gained the hollow applause which is lavished upon those who inflexibly adhere to an opinion once pronounced, though altered circumstances may justify and demand the modification or abandonment of it.

If I had been stimulated by personal ambition—that sort of ambition, I mean, which is content with the lead of a political party and the possession of political power—I might have encouraged and deferred to the scruples of the Sovereign, and might have appealed to the religious feelings of the country to rally round the throne, for the maintenance of the Protestant religion, and the protection of the Royal conscience.

From the imputation of other motives still more unworthy, the documents I now produce will, I trust, suffice to protect my memory.

I can with truth affirm, as I do solemnly affirm in the presence of Almighty God, ‘to whom all hearts be open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid,’ that in advising and promoting the measures of 1829 I was swayed by no fear except the fear of public calamity, and that I acted throughout on a deep conviction, that those measures were not only conducive to the general welfare, but that they had become imperatively necessary, in order to avert from interests which had a special claim upon my support—the interests of the Church and of institutions connected with the Church—an imminent and increasing danger.

It may be that I was unconsciously influenced by motives less perfectly pure and disinterested, by the secret satisfaction of being,

when the waves ran high,
A daring pilot in extremity ;²

but at any rate it was no ignoble ambition which prompted me to bear the brunt of a desperate conflict, and at the same time to submit to the sacrifice of every thing dear to a public man, excepting the approval of his own conscience, and the hope of ultimate justice.

² From Dryden's *Absealom and Achitophel*.

So ends Sir Robert Peel's Memoir, written shortly before his death. Two family letters may fitly close the chapter.

From Dean Cockburn.

Drayton: Saturday [March 7, 1829].

I am greatly pleased with the whole of your plans, and with the whole of your speech.

I should not, however, at such a moment, trouble you with my useless eulogies, but I think that you will be gratified to hear that the speech produced in Sir Robert precisely similar sentiments. He interrupted me continually in the reading of it with those short ebullitions of pleasure with which he is accustomed to express his feelings. 'Robin's the lad after all.' 'No Administration can stand in this country without him.' 'The Duke could do nothing without him.' 'These gentlemen, the Whigs, have no chance of getting in while Robert lives;' &c.

The speech [of Thursday] was brought to us on Friday afternoon from Birmingham, where it had been printed, *mirabile dictu*, early in the morning. It served for our dessert, and it served Sir Robert also for comments during the whole evening. Between every deal of the long-lasting rubber new commendations were poured forth upon the speech.

I congratulate you most heartily upon your success. I envy you the settlement of this agitating question, which has interrupted the harmony of nations for so many ages. I envy you, above all, the proud consciousness which you must feel of having conferred a real benefit on the human race.

The quotation³ 'his ego gratiora dictu' is the most apposite I ever met with.

³ 'I might have held language much more acceptable to the friends with whom I have long acted, and to the constituents whom I have lately lost. His ego gratiora dictu alia esse scio; sed me vera pro gratis

loqui, etsi meum ingenium non moneret, necessitas cogit. Vellem equidem vobis placere; sed multo malo vos salvos esse, qualicumque erga me animo futuri estis.'—*Livy*, iii. 68.

From Sir Robert Peel.

Drayton Manor : March 1829.

My dear Robert,—Though but little conversant with the politics of the day, I am not inattentive to the agitations which distract the great community of the Empire. It has been my anxious wish to have you withdrawn from the hostility of parties, but in your situation the prospect of such an event was very small.

I am happy to learn that, having been exposed to every species of difficulty, you continue in pretty good health and spirits. Human nature cannot, however, long escape the effects of extreme irritation. Let me therefore persuade you to embrace the first opportunity of bringing dear Julia and the children to Drayton, and of reposing as long as possible in the bosom of peace.

I have been obliged to nurse myself by keeping much at home, to prevent injury from the severity of winter.

Planting has been in active progress at Tammoor, and your farm is in a visible state of improvement, aided by skill and industry.

I expect your Easter holidays will soon commence.

Ever yours affectionately,

ROBERT PEEL.

CHAPTER V.

1829.

Metropolitan Police Bill—State of Ireland after Roman Catholic Relief—
Mr. Peel's Remedy—Ten Years of Firm Government—Efficient Police—
Ten Good Magistrates—Irish Poor—Irish Education.

BEFORE Easter Mr. Peel had passed through both Houses his two Irish Bills, for suppression of the Association, and disfranchisement of small freeholders, and the general measure for Roman Catholic Relief. Before Whit-Sunday, by the aid of a Select Committee, he sent to the Lords his Metropolitan Police Bill, commended to the Prime Minister's care.

To the Duke of Wellington.

Whitehall: May 29, 1829.

My dear Duke,—I send you the Report of the Committee of last year on the Police of the Metropolis. Pray read from page 20 to page 32.

The small printed book contains a statement of the number of criminal offenders committed to prison in the last seven years.

Page 19 has the number committed in London and Middlesex. In 1822 there were 2,539 committals; in 1825, 2,902; and in 1828, 3,516. This is a strong proof of the rapid increase of crime, and the necessity of some effectual measures for its repression. In 1822 there were 12 committals for breaking into a dwelling house; in 1825, 23; and in 1828, 102.

The paper marked A contains a list of parishes in which the watch establishment is defective. Just conceive the state of one parish, in which there are eighteen different

local boards for the management of the watch, each acting without concert with the other !

The paper marked B contains a list of parishes, in the immediate vicinity of London, in which there is absolutely no watch at all. Think of the state of Brentford and Deptford, with no sort of police by night ! I really think I need trouble you with no further proof of the necessity of putting an end to such a state of things.

My Bill enables the Secretary of State to abolish gradually the existing watch establishments, and to substitute in their room a police force that shall act by night and day, under the control of two magistrates, who will be executive officers and be relieved from the ordinary duties of justices, such as attending at quarter sessions, transacting parish business, &c. There is power to place the present Government establishments of police, the horse and foot patrol, under their superintendence.

I propose to substitute the new police gradually for the old one, not to attempt too much at first ; to begin perhaps with ten or fifteen parishes in the centre of the City of Westminster, and gradually to extend the police district. The present watch and the present watch rate are to continue until the Secretary of State notifies to a parish that he is ready to undertake the superintendence of it. From that time the present watch and the watch rate are to cease.

I defray the expense by a rate in the parishes that are actually included within the new police, the new rate to be paid when the present rate ceases. The new rate is to be collected exactly like the poor rate, the same property to be assessed to each. The maximum of the new police rate is eightpence in the pound. That cannot under any circumstances be exceeded.

I hardly know what objections may be made to the Bill, as I have heard none in the Commons of the least force. There has only been one petition against the Bill, from the parish of Hackney.

It may be said, there has not been due notice to the

parishes. The answer is, the subject was taken up at the beginning of last Session. The Report of the Committee was made last Session, and recommended the very measure which is now introduced. The Bill was brought in this year on April 15, and a copy sent to the vestry of each parish.

It may be objected, that in country parishes, by taking the assessment according to the poor rate, the land is made to contribute to the police rate, whereas it ought to be confined to houses. My answer is, the land ought to contribute. Look at the offence of horse stealing, and the expense to which the country is put in the prosecution of offenders. The holder of land will derive great security for his property from an efficient police, and ought to pay for it. Take the case again of the market gardener. Who will be more benefited than he will be?

It may be said, that many places are made to contribute, which are either extra-parochial or have police establishments for their own protection, such as the Inns of Court, the Docks, Westminster Abbey. Surely all these places ought to pay their share of the expense of a general police. Why is the lawyer who is protected as he walks through the streets not to pay? At Lincoln's Inn they may have their own watch within the interior of the Court, but in case of serious robbery to whom will they apply but to the police? Suppose the attempt to set fire to Westminster Abbey had succeeded, of what use would their own five or six drowsy watchmen have been to guard the property against a mob of thieves? My first act when the alarm was given was to send down the police. As to the Docks, it is not necessary to say more than that some of them are in the parish of Wapping. They collect together all the scum of society in their immediate neighbourhood, and surely ought to bear their full share of the expense of keeping them in order.

Pray pass the Bill through this Session, for you cannot think what trouble it has given me.

The Bill passed. Mr. Peel took pains to make the best appointments under it, and before the end of the year his London Police were in working order.

To Mr. Gregory.

(Private and confidential.)

Whitehall: May 29, 1829.

I have completed a work which has given me great trouble, but which was absolutely necessary, the annihilation of the parochial watch of the metropolis and its environs; and have given power to the Secretary of State to reorganise, on a very extensive scale, a new system of police.

It has occurred to me that if there were a military man conversant in the details of the police system of Ireland, he might possibly be very usefully employed here. But then he must be a very superior man to what I recollect of police magistrates in Ireland. Tell me in strict confidence what is the character of the people now employed there.

I require a man of great energy, great activity both of body and mind, accustomed to strict discipline, and with the power of enforcing it, and taking an interest in the duty to be assigned to him. Then he must be a gentleman, and entirely trustworthy.

Do not mention this matter to any one, but tell me, first, whether you think 800*l.* a year and perhaps a residence would tempt one of the Irish magistrates to accept the office; and secondly, whether you have any man now in Ireland who would exactly suit my purpose.

There will be probably a force of between two and three thousand men ultimately under his command. With the soldier I should unite a sensible lawyer as the other magistrate. Write to me as soon as you can.

To Mr. Goulburn.

(Private.)

Whitehall: July, 1829.

I have had great difficulty in finding a person properly qualified for the situation of Receiver of the Police, on which office the whole success of the plan depends. All

the legal contracts are to be made by his officers, all the property of which I am to dispossess the several parishes is to be vested in him, and every payment is to be made by him.

I really believe that no man who has not had a legal education, and has not also some practical experience as an accountant, will be able to discharge the duties of the office with any comfort or safety to himself.

From the Duke of Wellington.

London : Nov. 3, 1829.

I congratulate you upon the entire success of the Police in London. It is impossible to see anything more respectable than they are.

To the Duke of Wellington.

Whitehall : Nov. 5, 1829.

I am very glad indeed to hear that you think well of the Police. It has given me from first to last more trouble than anything I ever undertook. But the men are gaining a knowledge of their duties so rapidly, that I am very sanguine of the ultimate result.

I want to teach people that liberty does not consist in having your house robbed by organised gangs of thieves, and in leaving the principal streets of London in the nightly possession of drunken women and vagabonds.

The chief danger of the failure of the new system will be, if it is made a job, if gentlemen's servants and so forth are placed in the higher offices. I must frame regulations to guard against this as effectually as I can.

Parliament rose early, and during the recess the Home Secretary's thoughts were still engaged with Ireland.

To Lord Francis Gower.

Whitehall : July 5, 1829.

I am very glad to hear of your safe arrival, and beg that you will continue that perfectly unofficial and unreserved

correspondence which is ten times more interesting, and gives ten times more real information, than formal pre-meditated despatches. I intend, I assure you, to adopt the same *sermo pedestris* in writing to you.

We had a meeting of the Cabinet yesterday, to 'envisage,' as Lord Wellesley says, the long catalogue of questions relating to England, Ireland, and Scotland, and all matters whatsoever of foreign and domestic policy.

There was rather a mournful expression of countenance at the mention of three Irish subjects, which it will certainly require no little patience and ingenuity combined to bring to a successful issue. First, the state of the Irish poor, particularly in their relation to the English poor laws, and the maintenance in comfort of the English labourer; secondly, the Irish Grand Jury laws; thirdly, Irish education. Now we must put each of these three intermediate questions in a train of serious consideration at least, and the sooner we begin upon them the better.

I despair of making any essential change in the Grand Jury system. No board in Dublin could superintend the local concerns of the different counties in Ireland; and even if the works were rather better conducted than they are at present, the policy of withdrawing the management of local details from the resident gentry might be very questionable. It would be widening, instead of reconciling, the difference between English and Irish practice.

As to the Poor Laws, we had better confine the consideration of that most difficult subject as much as possible, in the first instance at least, within the narrowest limits. I expect very little to result from the best deliberation we can give to it, but we must prove when Parliament re-assembles that we have thoroughly discussed it, be the result of our discussion what it may.

The question is full of difficulties. I doubt whether the introduction of the English system, however modified, will do much good in Ireland. But here is our embarrassment. We cannot get rid of the poor laws in England, and while they remain there will be an increasing tendency on the part

of Ireland to make the English poor laws subservient to the maintenance of the Irish paupers. This is a manifest injustice, much more manifest than the remedy for it.

It will be no cure for this particular evil to multiply infirmaries and dispensaries and establishments for the sick and impotent in Ireland. That is not the class of paupers by which the English labourer is injured, and the English landholder is burdened. They suffer from the paupers who have health and strength to undertake a journey.

We must not, however, condemn too precipitately the incursion of Irish labourers into England. We must bear in mind the growing increase of manufactures in other parts of the world, and consider well the advantages as well as disadvantages of cheap labour.

The immediate evil of it is its effect on the condition of the English labourer. A combination of other causes has contributed to deteriorate that condition, comparing it at present with the condition of the labourer some forty or fifty years since. His comforts, in the agricultural districts at least, have, I fear, been gradually diminishing, from the want of a profitable demand for his labour ; and while he is struggling with difficulty against merely domestic evils, in come a host of ragged Irishmen, as strong and as patient of labour as himself, with fewer wants and fewer charges, and underbid him in his own market.

This letter is long enough, without entering upon education. I will only observe that I think the time is now come when we must make up our minds as to what we will do, and what we will not do, and by pronouncing a well-considered and decided opinion on our own part be enabled to influence the mind of the country.

In the meantime it was no easy task to keep the peace between Orangemen and Catholics.

To the Duke of Wellington.

July 23, 1829.

I have asked Lord Francis whether any proof can be had of the interference of which he speaks. If it can, I

think we ought to consider the Duke of Cumberland in the capacity of a Privy Councillor, and that his relation to Windsor is only an additional reason for insisting that he shall not foment disorder for which others are held responsible.

That manifesto to the Orangemen, issued just before July 12, deserves serious consideration. The advice to the Orangemen, to continue united, but to avoid processions, is a servile imitation of the proclamation of the Roman Catholic Association. Their advice was the same to the Roman Catholics, 'Continue organised and disciplined, but do not break the peace.'

I doubt whether it ought to be permitted without serious remonstrance, that in the present state of Ireland a Prince of the blood, known to possess the confidence of the King, should place himself at the head of an organised body of the King's subjects, and tell them that the continuance of that organisation is necessary for the maintenance of their religion. We must not estimate the effect of these manifestos in Ireland by the effect which they produce in London.

The Prime Minister, however, thought the evidence of mischievous intention insufficient.

From the Duke of Wellington.

Walmer Castle : July 24, 1829.

I entertain no doubt that the Duke of Cumberland is doing all the mischief in Ireland that he can. The difficulty will be to prove a case of which we can take notice, and upon which we can proceed to extremities. If we are not prepared to proceed to extremities, I am inclined to think that we ought not to notice the Duke's conduct at all.

It appears to me that whenever we go to the King upon the conduct of his brother, it must be with the desire, as a remedy, that his Majesty should forbid him his presence. For this we must have a clear case against the Duke, and a case either of illegal conduct, or conduct so nearly

approaching illegality as to leave no doubt that it ought to be marked by the King's disapprobation. I entertain no doubt of the mischief done by and of the mischievous intention of his letter to Lord Enniskillen. But it would be difficult to prove the intention; and after all this letter was not so mischievous as the manifesto of Lord Enniskillen and others.

All that we can say at present is that the Duke of Cumberland is a great inconvenience, as he always has been, and always will be. But I am afraid that he is not the only one, or the principal one, and that we cannot attempt to remove him from the King's presence till we have a complete case, without exposing ourselves to the blame of all good men in the country.

The Grand Master was therefore let alone until 1836, when the House of Commons addressed the Crown on the subject, the Duke resigned, and the Lodges ceased to exist. For the present Roman Catholics had recourse to violent retaliation.

From the Duke of Wellington.

Walmer Castle: July 25, 1829.

As far as I can form an opinion from what appears in these papers, the Roman Catholics have in every instance been the aggressors.

It would be very desirable that the Irish Government should take some steps to manifest their determination to put down the Roman Catholic as well as the Protestant party. Could not a large reward be offered by proclamation for the discovery and conviction of those concerned in the affair mentioned by Major d'Arcy in his report of the 16th?

• I entertain a much more unfavourable opinion of the state of affairs in Ireland since I have read these papers. We shall not get the better of the mischief without the adoption of stronger measures than any yet adopted.

To the Duke of Wellington.

July 27, 1829.

I have already written to Lord Francis on the subject of Major d'Arcy's letter, earnestly calling his attention and that of the Lord Lieutenant to the scandalous and unprovoked outrage which it details, and strongly urging the policy of proving by a severe example that the Roman Catholic party is not to undertake the task of suppressing Orange processions.

I agree with you that we must take some decided steps for the settlement of Ireland, but I doubt whether we can take any effectually that have not the consent of Parliament. We may no doubt repress any actual violence by military force; but I think some severe discipline must be permanently administered, and discipline for which Ireland ought to pay.

I doubt the policy of taking so large a proportion of the expense of the police upon the public funds. The police is very unpopular, chiefly for two reasons—because it is expensive, and because it does its duty. But for every purpose, excepting the resistance to physical force or the actual dispersion of organised assemblages, the police is much more efficient, I conceive, than the military.

Whatever laws of coercion we may pass, we must, I think, trust their effectual execution for many years to come to an armed stipendiary police, acting in most cases under stipendiary magistrates.

Why should England pay the charge of civilising Ireland, either by direct pecuniary advances or indirectly by maintaining a great military force? My impression still is that we may dispense with a great military force in Ireland for the purpose of defending her against military aggression—that the foreign powers, which might have taken part with the whole Roman Catholic population discontented on account of exclusion and disabilities, will not take part with a set of lawless ruffians who set all control at defiance.

That they must be repressed there can be no doubt, and

let Ireland, as is but just, pay the charge of suppressing her own disorders, and have therefore an inducement to keep the peace. It appears to me that we ought to consider the policy of greatly extending the police system, and laying the expense of it on the land.

From the Duke of Wellington.

Walmer Castle : July 28, 1829.

You and I are travelling upon the same road, but I think I have gone a little faster than you have, probably too fast.

I quite agree with you in thinking that we ought to render the police in Ireland as efficient as possible, and this at the expense of Ireland. We cannot effect this measure excepting with the consent of Parliament. But I look to the necessity of earlier, nay, of immediate measures.

I think it most probable that in August there will be Orange meetings and processions, and whether there are or not, there will be Ribbon meetings in the North, in expectation of the Orange meetings and processions, and to oppose them ; and that at all events the state of ferment which exists in Limerick, Clare, Tipperary, and parts of Waterford and Cork, will continue throughout the autumn and winter.

Are we to sit by and see this system continue ? My opinion is that if this state of things continues, we ought to issue a proclamation to forbid all meetings of more than twelve persons, under pain of trial by court martial, and all removals from house to house by individuals, under the same pain.

We might extend the system over the whole country, or enforce it in particular counties or places, as might be thought proper, but I would recommend that the measure should be made effectual, and should manifest our determination to keep the country quiet.

If we should be under the necessity of adopting these or such measures, we must of course call Parliament at the earliest moment that may be possible afterwards.

Mr. Peel's first remedy for Ireland at this time was ten years of firm government, and for this he looked not to soldiers chiefly but to well-organised police.

To Lord Francis Gower.

July 30, 1829.

We must seriously consider some extensive and decisive system of measures for the permanent civilisation of Ireland.

We have got rid of the Catholic question, and we shall have done little by getting rid of it, unless it enables us to command the assent of a great majority in Parliament to measures calculated not merely to repress casual outrages and insurrectionary movements, but to habituate the people to a vigorous unsparing enforcement and administration of the law, criminal and civil.

I postpone the consideration of extensive schemes for the employment, and education, and improvement of the condition of the people, and address myself to the discussion of two measures which must be preliminary, and are indispensable to the success of all such schemes—the constitution of a thoroughly efficient police, and the punishment of crime at the immediate instance and through the intervention of the Government.

I well know how much is done by the police as at present established, and how little security there would be for the effectual administration of the law if the Government did not interfere through Crown prosecutions and such extra-judicial inquiries as those that have been lately instituted. But I see no alternative but carrying the principle both of the police and of the Crown prosecutions to their full extent, and fairly trying the experiment at any cost of compelling for ten years to come obedience to the law.

Ten years' experience of the advantage of obedience will induce a country to be obedient without much extraordinary compulsion.

I would advise you, therefore, to consider in the first

place what would be the constitution of the police which would render it most efficient. I would disregard all local interests, all desire on the part of magistrates to recommend constables, all clamour in the House of Commons about patronage, and if, as I strongly suspect, the best plan will be to take the nominations to all offices high and low in the police directly into the hands of the Lord Lieutenant, I would take them.

I do not see the necessity of keeping any large military force in Ireland for the purpose of protecting it from foreign aggression. There can be no sympathy now on the part of any civilised government with the Ribbonmen and marauders and ruffians of every description that band themselves against the law.

You must probably, at first, back your police, however constituted, with a considerable military force. But I hope the time would shortly come when the police acting alone might be relied upon for the suppression of mobs of all kinds, and for the apprehension of offenders.

I would consolidate the law relating to the police, and have only one description of police, appointed in the same manner and paid from the same source. That source should be the land of Ireland. I doubt whether a doit ought to be advanced from the public funds.

The time is come when it is unnecessary any longer to pet Ireland. We only spoil her by very undeserved flattery, and by treating her to everything for which she ought herself to pay. We relieve her from taxes to which other parts of the United Kingdom are subject; we support our own poor and hers also.

Do let us compel her to keep her own peace, and for two reasons; first because it is just that she should do so, and secondly because it is politic, if she will be unruly, to make her pay for that luxury.

Ireland is, proportionately, quite as flourishing as most other parts of the United Kingdom. Why should not Ireland from her own means make provision for the ordinary execution of the criminal law, for the preservation

of life and property from all ordinary dangers, in the same way that every great town in England and Scotland does ?

Either through the Grand Juries, or directly by a land tax specially levied for that express purpose, I would raise a fund for the purpose of paying the expense of administering the law in Ireland.

Why should an absentee Irish landlord draw ten thousand a year from Ireland, contribute nothing by personal exertion towards the maintenance of the peace in Ireland, and throw on the Army, and therefore on the Treasury, the charge of protecting his property, and ensuring the receipt of his rent ?

The same observations apply in principle to Crown prosecutions. I would undertake them. I would have, not in name perhaps, but in substance, a public prosecutor. I would, at the instance of Government, bring to justice every offender against the peace of the country. But I would, if it be possible, charge the expense to Ireland.

Supposing the survey and new valuation of Ireland were completed, I see no obstacle, which might not be overcome, to the adoption, on a scale fully commensurate with the necessity, of the measures to which I have referred. Their principle is—that the Government should undertake to compel by a civil force, having a military organisation, obedience to the law ; that the Government should undertake, through its own agents, to punish offences against the public peace, and should charge the expense to Ireland.

When I speak of having an efficient police, I mean to include all that might be necessary to ensure their protection and their efficacy—police stations, barracks, &c.

Other measures of a still stronger nature may for a time be necessary, but will do little permanently to civilise the country, and will be imperfectly executed, without some systematic plan of police.

In some counties barbarous violence was exceptionally rampant.

To Lord Francis Gower.

Whitehall : Aug. 14, 1829.

My opinion is decidedly in favour of putting down by any means (justifiable of course in the eye of the law) the insurrectionary spirit of Tipperary. That county is by far the most troublesome county in Ireland, and my firm belief is that the turbulence of it has become habitual, and arises out of sheer wickedness, encouraged by the apathy of one set of magistrates and the half connivance of another.

For the last thirty years, and probably for the last three hundred, this same county of Tipperary has been conspicuous, even in the Irish annals of violence and barbarity, having less excuse in the distress and suffering of its inhabitants than most other parts of Ireland. But there is more than one district in the South of Ireland in which plenty and prosperity incite to crime, rather than repress it. I would therefore make every consideration yield to the paramount one of restoring, or introducing I should rather say, order and tranquillity in this district. The quieting of Tipperary will have a powerful influence on other parts of the country.

The cry against the police, and in favour of the military, is mainly owing to the superior efficiency of the police in enforcing the law.

Call it by what name you please, police, or constabulary force, this is certain, that the reduction of Ireland to peaceful habits and obedience to the law must be effected by the agency of an organised stipendiary civil force, whose exclusive province and profession it shall be to execute the law.

I would certainly constitute that force in such a manner as to preclude all just objection to it on the score of partiality. I presume that at present all party distinctions in the police are forbidden, all attendance on Orange lodges and so forth, and I think that the regulations in that respect, and regulations founded on the same principle,

cannot be too scrupulously enforced. It would be a great object to infuse into the police force an *esprit de corps* obliterating all other distinctions local or religious, but it will be greatly obstructed by the existence of any political clubs or exclusive combinations in the police itself.

Consider maturely the suggestion which I before offered to you, that of abolishing all local appointments, all magisterial interference with the nomination of the police. Take your police as I am taking my metropolitan police. Have a depôt in Dublin, and one, if necessary, in Cork, Limerick, and Belfast. Have the names of all candidates enrolled, let them be strictly examined, and their certificates of character examined also, and select those from time to time who are best suited for your purpose.

Mix the Kerry man with the northern, and the Galway with the Dublin, and when they have been engaged for a few weeks in the same service, pelted with the same missiles, and have had to rely for protection from a common danger on each other's courage, they will soon establish a bond of connection which it will not be easy to break.

But I am wandering from the immediate point on which you asked my opinion. I see no objection to give to the officers in command in Tipperary the authority of a magistrate, but they should be informed that the trust is merely a temporary one, and that their names will be taken out of the commission when they are removed from their military commands.

If the gentlemen of Ireland would make a systematic attempt to enforce the law, my belief is, that they have it in their own power to ensure their own protection and maintain the public peace. When the gentlemen of Clare were blaming the remissness of Government, and bewailing the violence of Mr. O'Connell, what did Mr. Lloyd do, with very little assistance that I know of, but the intrinsic vigour of the law properly exerted?

I am satisfied that ten good magistrates in any county of Ireland, combining together steadily to administer the law, determined to enforce it, to represent to the Govern-

ment the misconduct of other magistrates, if other magistrates sought to counteract them by the improper exercise of their authority, would succeed against the united influence of mobs and priests and demagogues.

For other remedies, to follow firm government, Mr. Peel was thinking out two difficult problems, both strongly suggested by the Relief Act—namely, how to organise joint education for Catholic and Protestant, and how to give the Catholic priests a more enlightened training.

To Mr. J. Leslie Foster.

(Most private.)

Whitehall : Sept. 1, 1829.

There are two points of great importance and great difficulty on which I shall be glad to have your opinion : first, on the general question of Irish Education ; secondly, on Maynooth.

I have been reading again with much attention the reports of the last Commission, of which you were a member. The first report treats the subject very fully, and in my opinion very justly. Is it possible to obliterate for practical purposes the recollection of all the discussions and the correspondence that subsequently took place, and to revert to the first report ?

That report pronounces an opinion that a large and fluctuating body of subscribers, bound only by the rules which themselves establish, cannot be the fittest instrument of directing a system for general education.

It may be observed that this was written under an impression that a responsible Board might perform the function of the Kildare Street Society, and make the reading of the Scriptures a fundamental part of the instruction given ; that the hopes in this respect have been disappointed ; and that the principle of scriptural education is now mainly involved in the question of maintaining or abandoning the Society.

On the other hand, however, it must be remembered that the Society does not, or at least did not at the time of

the report, succeed in this professed object of making a religious education the basis of their general course of instruction. The report states that the use of the Scriptures is frequently a mere matter of form.

The supplemental education in religion, which all admit to be indispensable, is in fact very insufficiently provided, and in some cases altogether neglected.

Now if this be the case, are we acting wisely in committing ourselves to the support of an institution which, from the number of its members and the absence of individual responsibility, is admitted to be badly constituted for its object, and which does not *bona fide* and practically enforce the principle of scriptural education?

Would it be impossible to carry into effect some such arrangement as the following?

To constitute a Board consisting of seven or nine persons unsalaried, with a salaried secretary, to preside over the general system of instruction paid for by the State.

To establish no particular regulations with respect to the number of or the religion of schoolmasters in each separate school, but to entrust the selection to the discretion of the Commissioners.

Either to make a compilation from the Scriptures, out of which the Protestant and Roman Catholic children should read daily when receiving united instruction; or to give to the Protestant child the Protestant version and to permit each child to read from his own Testament; to do this without reference to the authorities of our Church or to Roman Catholic prelates, which reference would, in my opinion, merely provoke unavailing and interminable controversies.

To give access to the school to the Protestant minister on one day of the week, and to the Roman Catholic priest on another, and permit each to give to the children of his own persuasion such further religious instruction in the peculiar tenets of his faith as to him might seem advisable.

Could any fair objection be made to the principle of such a plan, either by Protestants or Roman Catholics, it

being always borne in mind that the object is to give education in common to Protestant and Roman Catholic children, without a view to the conversion of the latter ?

I doubt whether the chief advantages to be gained from the interference of the Government in the instruction of the Irish people are not the education of the children of different persuasions in common, and the preventing a very bad education, which probably would be the result if Government did not interfere.

The undertaking to educate Roman Catholic children with an utter disclaimer of any views of conversion precludes of itself any thoroughly satisfactory arrangement with respect to their religious instruction.

The very principle on which we set out is opposed to such an arrangement. We may insist on scriptural education, and I do not deny the advantage of insisting on it, even if that advantage mainly consist in the public proof thus given that the State recognises and upholds the truths of revealed religion. But, I fear, the mere reading from the New Testament as a lesson book, without catechism and without explanation, gives to a child a very imperfect religious instruction.

Pray turn all these things in your mind, and write to me unreservedly and confidentially your opinion upon them.

The reply was disheartening, alike on popular education and on Maynooth. In both departments the Roman Catholic clergy, Mr. Foster thought, would stand out for spiritual independence, and a great body of Protestant feeling was opposed to granting national funds for education under Catholic control.

From Mr. J. Leslie Foster.

Sept. 12, 1829.

I feel most fully that the existing relations of the Government to the education of the lower orders in Ireland are open to the objections stated in your letters. Nevertheless, I am seriously convinced that such are the

peculiarities of our situation, that any attempt which could be at present made to substitute another system would involve all concerned in far more serious difficulties than any which can be pointed out at present, and, what is of not less importance, would compromise the attainment of a vast deal of practical good, which is now certainly accomplished.

The Reports of the Commissioners of Education point out the imperfections of the Kildare Street system; they point out, however, with equal clearness the real services that it has rendered. The question appears to me to be, whether a system less imperfect is now open for adoption.

The true source of difficulty is that it is nothing less than impossible to deal with the Roman Catholic clergy. They are not to be conciliated, nor co-operated with. Their pretensions and their fears alike render it impossible. They will give fair words at first, in the hope of getting rid of the Kildare Street Society; but when they find that it is not intended that they should themselves be clothed with the powers which they desire, they will take their stand against any system which can be suggested.

If it is proposed to have a new Board of Commissioners, they fly off on the principle of how the Board is to be constructed. Supposing it were possible to agree with them on that point, they will be off as soon as it is proposed that the Douay Testament shall really be read. Suppose they are yielded to on this also, upon the condition of selections being substituted, they never will agree to any possible selection. Suppose again that difficulty overcome, and that it is offered to give them entrance to the schools to give instruction in religion to the children of their own persuasion, they will say that they have no time, and that lay teachers must be provided and paid for the express purpose. Suppose it were possible to concede this also, they declare that it is not of the smallest value unless the Roman Catholic bishops are to appoint and dismiss the teachers.

The truth is, they fear every system of education, unless

they are to be permitted to employ it as an instrument for the upholding of their own dominion.

I have, therefore, no hopes of its being possible that any new system such as you could propose or assent to would escape their utmost hostility. And I apprehend this further inconvenience from the attempt, that any renewed agitation of the subject will call into violent action those feelings which, if not absolutely asleep, are at least in a sort of sullen torpor.

Another source of real embarrassment to the Government inseparable from this undertaking is the manner in which any such measures would be viewed by the Protestants of Ireland, and through their representations by the Protestants of Great Britain. The subject, beyond any other that I can imagine, would be made the occasion for exasperating their feelings of hostility to the Administration, which are already so prevalent.

In this country I am thoroughly satisfied that you would have, from very various motives, the High Church, the Protestant Dissenters, the religious societies, and the Brunswickers all against you, and you would not have even the Catholics with you.

I am aware that my opinions may appear to you somewhat exaggerated on this subject, for I write them without the least reserve. You know that at least they have not suddenly been taken up.

As to Maynooth, I wish indeed that I could suggest anything for your assistance, but the same impracticability of any dealing between Protestants and the Roman Church upon religious subjects appears to me to be here still more unequivocally opposed to us, at every step we can make.

After every consideration that I have given to this institution, I really do believe that, bad as the results of Maynooth have been and are, anything we could do with it would more probably make it worse than better.

Their system is to take young Irish peasants from their native mountains, and keep them close prisoners for seven years, in order to convert them into machines fitted for

their purpose. Any regulations which would prevent their doing so they would of course indignantly reject, and any that would leave this part of the system in its vigour would appear to be at least useless.

I willingly pass to a more agreeable view of Irish Catholicism, and venture to assure you, notwithstanding some ominous appearances to the contrary, that the measures of the last Session are working right well for the future prospects of Ireland. The heads of parties are indeed as much embittered and alienated as ever, but the number of their partisans and followers is every day rapidly decreasing.

You know Ireland too well to suppose that the state of Tipperary has anything to do with the Catholic question. The peasantry of Ireland, whether Protestant or Catholic, love fighting for its own sake, but there is less meaning in their battles than it is possible for the British public to suppose. Amongst the upper ranks of the Catholics, amongst the Protestants, shopkeepers and substantial persons, all the tendencies that I can see or hear of are to tranquillity. Even O'Connell's popularity is rapidly declining amongst all these classes. The subscription for him, which is only 14,000*l.* upon paper, will never half of it be paid. Jealousies and rivalries are springing up in every direction amongst the Catholics, and the 10*l.* freeholders, who have been brought forward to register by priests and associations, are everywhere (except perhaps in Clare) making secret assurances of attachment to their landlords.

I see a great deal of this passing around me even in this agitated county, but it is not from that I speak. I know that it is the opinion of those on whose cool judgment I have the most reliance, who have lately returned from the several circuits, that the same is the case in almost every part of Ireland.

Notwithstanding these brighter prospects, stern legislation was found necessary to put down organised crime; and in devising what it should be Mr. Peel made a careful study of the general condition of Ireland.

To Lord Francis Gower.

Whitehall: Nov. 19, 1829.

We must apply ourselves most seriously in the period that will elapse before the meeting of Parliament, to considering what measures can be adopted effectually to check the shocking system of outrage and assassination which prevails, and has prevailed time out of mind, in many parts of Ireland.

There can be no fear of Parliament, if we can present to its consideration measures which hold out a rational prospect of defeating robbers and assassins. We shall have the assent of triumphant majorities. And even if we had cause to despair of their assent, it would not be the less our duty to attempt the application of a remedy, and let others be responsible for its rejection.

The great object that we must aim at is to establish some permanent protection for life and property, something that shall outlive one or two Sessions of Parliament, and lay the foundation of a better state of society hereafter.

We shall do nothing effectual until that period shall arrive when the law—the ordinary established law—shall be regularly and peremptorily carried into execution, and we must be very careful, therefore, that if temporary remedies must be devised, they have no tendency to postpone that period, by relaxing the energy with which the ordinary law is executed, by weakening confidence in the ample protection which it is calculated to afford, whenever it is regularly executed, or by widening the differences and increasing the alienation and distrust that at present exist between the higher and lower classes of society.

I wrote to you some time since fully with respect to the consolidation and amendment of the laws which relate to the stipendiary police of Ireland, and to the establishment of one uniform system of police under the immediate and exclusive control of the Executive Government.

My impression is that all distinctions as to the character of the police should be abolished; that all

appointments in the police and all removals from it should rest with the Lord Lieutenant ; that he should be at liberty to apply it as he may think fit, levying a fixed proportion of the expense on every district of Ireland in which the police should be permanently stationed as the ordinary instrument for carrying the law into execution, and an additional rate from those districts in which it should become necessary to employ a larger than the usual proportion of police, for the purpose of defeating and preventing extraordinary disturbance. I have no doubt that you will thoroughly discuss this matter with the Lord Lieutenant, and that you will in due time apprise me of your sentiments with respect to it.

Suppose we shall resolve upon such an alteration in the constitution of the police as that suggested, we must not be very sanguine as to any immediate effects which it will produce. We must for some time no doubt continue to employ very nearly the same instruments and in the same manner. No very striking and immediate benefit can be expected from the change.

What, then, must be done for the purpose of giving without delay some additional protection to those whose lives are in danger in certain districts of the country, if they claim their lawful rights of property, or if they exert themselves in the maintenance of the peace ?

There is no country, I apprehend, in which there is a greater difference in the character and habits of the population of different districts, than there is in Ireland. It would therefore be very difficult to devise a general measure for the repression of disorder that should be fit for simultaneous and universal application. Some discretionary power must probably be left in the Lord Lieutenant to call into operation such powers as might be confided to him according to particular exigencies, and to apply them to particular districts.

The main question is, what shall those powers be ? and the decision on this question must depend on the nature and character of the danger against which they are intended

if the necessity for the grant of them should be clearly established?

There remains the third question, Can we propose anything new—any system of moderate coercion and restraint to which no great constitutional objection would apply, which might remain in force, if not permanently, at least for a much longer period than that for which the Insurrection Act could endure, and which might, like the Insurrection Act, be capable of temporary and local application at the discretion of the Lord Lieutenant?

Can we revert to the principle of those measures by which, at a remote period in the history of this country, ‘a fierce and licentious people,’ as Hume calls them, ‘were reduced under the salutary restraint of law and government’?

The circumstances of England at that period, and of many parts of Ireland at the present time, are in some respects similar, so far at least as regards the character of the offences committed and the nature of the evil to be dealt with.

‘The whole fabric of the civil government,’ says Dr. Lingard, ‘was nearly dissolved. Injuries were inflicted without provocation, and retaliated without mercy, and the Saxon, like the Dane, had imbibed a spirit of insubordination, and a contempt for peace and justice and religion.’ This sounds very like the modern history of Tipperary.

It is not impossible that those measures which were found useful a thousand years since in repressing violence, and ‘in gradually composing the minds of men to industry and justice,’ may still have their effect, notwithstanding the great changes that have taken place in the structure of society. They must, no doubt, be modified according to those changes, but the principle of them seems not inapplicable.

In devising and in carrying measures of this nature into effect, I am aware there must be many difficulties. Some will say you do not go far enough, and will call out for the employment of the military and for martial law.

to guard. We can take no additional security that I am aware of against open insurrection, or against such assemblages of the people for unlawful purposes as are formidable from numbers and physical force.

The common and statute law of England give great power to the Government in preventing and repressing such assemblages.

Assuming that we shall be under the necessity of proposing some new measures of precaution, we have to determine whether we shall take the Insurrection Act as we find it, or shall modify its enactments, or shall attempt some new remedy in the place of one which we must admit, whatever may have been its temporary success, has not produced any lasting good effect on the morals and the habits of the population.

In favour of the Insurrection Act as it stands may be urged the strong opinions of the magistrates, and a prevailing wish for it among a very numerous and respectable class.

On the other hand, we must not overlook the objections to it. Supposing it were to pass, it would probably pass for a very limited period, and it would not relieve us from the necessity of devising something more permanent in its operation. We have had repeated trials of it, and repeated proofs that it works no permanent good.

No doubt there has been a full justification for proposing it, and the same necessity may again recur. The country has been, and may again be in that state, which leaves no alternative but to confine people to their houses, in order that they may not murder their neighbours by night. But it cannot I think be maintained that the Insurrection Act is a good Act, as forming part of a system of government, or that it has a tendency to reclaim, and permanently to improve, the lower classes.

Can we modify the Act? If a less degree of coercion will suffice, why should we forego the benefit of it? Why should we take for granted that Parliament, having once conceded the modified powers, will hereafter refuse the extended ones,

But there is nothing for the military to contend with. Multiply tenfold the military force in Ireland, and it will give no security against the Doneraile conspiracy, or the murder of Mr. Going or Mr. Day. It will neither give security against the perpetration of the offence nor the means of detecting it afterwards.

Others will attribute the frequency of crime in Ireland to the wretched condition of the peasantry, to the tenure of land, to high rents, and to various other causes, many of which are out of the control of any human authority, and scarcely one of which admits of the application of any immediate remedy. Whatever can be done with the view of ultimately improving the condition of the peasantry, it will not dispense with or diminish the necessity for a vigilant superintendence of those districts in Ireland to which I have been mainly referring.

If the disorders should increase to that extent, that there should be no alternative but to apply severe measures of coercion, there would only be an additional argument for devising at the same time some permanent means of effectually executing the ordinary laws.

The following instance shows how warmly Mr. Peel resented want of courage and public spirit among Irish landlords.

To Lord Francis Gower.

Whitehall : Dec. 16, 1829.

I have read Mr. Cosby's letter from the Queen's County, with admiration of the conduct of Patrick Brennan and of Mary Donnaly ; with the utmost satisfaction that, as no one else would reward them, the Government has rewarded their courage out of the public funds ; but with equal indignation that in such a case it should be necessary to apply to the Government for five pounds for a poor creature who so justly deserves the name of ' heroine ' which is given to her by Mr. Cosby.

But, good God ! where is the heroism of the gentlemen of Queen's County, where is their sense of self-interest,

when they can leave the charge of rewarding and protecting Brennan and his maid to the Castle? It was right for the Lord Lieutenant in any event to mark his approbation of their conduct; but if the gentlemen of that county had a proper spirit, they would be jealous of any one claiming to share with them the honour and duty of providing both recompense and security for these persons, who have set an example by which their superiors might profit.

I feel I am writing with very unofficial warmth on this subject, but I have not recovered from the indignation and disgust with which I read Mr. Cosby's letter. Here is a man, according to his account, in very humble life, 'whose conduct, it is admitted by every respectable and well-disposed farmer in the country, has been a very great cause of checking the system of outrage in the most disturbed district of the country, and whose example has prevented the commission of any other outrage since his other house was attacked.' This man is in personal danger on account of his setting that example. He cannot till his land like any other farmer. He must keep garrison at home in order that he may not be murdered. And yet, unless the Government had advanced fifty pounds to Brennan, 'he would be driven next spring for his rent by his landlord.'

These are literal extracts from Mr. Cosby's letter. Who is the landlord that is to 'drive' this man? and who are the gentlemen that are to stand quietly by and witness the driving? If this man wants another 50*l.*, or the maid servant three times the sum she has received, I hope the Lord Lieutenant will give it them.

I dare say the 'driver' of Brennan is among the loudest of those who complain of the apathy and indifference of the Government, and attribute Irish disturbance to the want of troops and of the Insurrection Act.

I know Mr. Cosby himself to be a very respectable gentleman, and he probably individually has done as much as could be expected from him in behalf of Brennan, or at least more than any one else. Is it too late to suggest to

him, that if the gentlemen and the wealthy farmers would publicly come forward, and pledge themselves to the support and protection of Brennan, they would do more to secure the peace of the county than anything which the Lord Lieutenant can do?

On subjects other than Ireland the letters of interest in 1829 are few.

One correspondence illustrates the working at this date of patronage, ministerial, parliamentary, and departmental. A letter from Lord Stowell to Mr. Peel requests him, as 'the very last favour I shall ever ask,' to help in getting his nephew made Comptroller of the Customs at Newcastle—'not, as its title would seem to import, a post of much labour or responsibility,' for 'Government had in many of the minor ports abolished it as a sinecure.' The nephew, 'an excellent young man, was not able to acquire sufficient knowledge to answer the expectations of the examiners of the present day at Oxford,' but his mother vouched for his possessing 'considerable arithmetical skill and information.' Looking to the nature of the office, his uncle deemed him to be 'a very proper candidate in point of qualification,' and the appointment was 'of immense importance to him, as it would introduce him to a highly advantageous marriage.'

Mr. Peel passes on the request to the Duke of Wellington, who writes :

As soon as I received your note, I sent to Planta [Secretary to the Treasury] to stop another arrangement recommended by the Commissioners of Customs, and desired him to inquire whether the gentleman recommended was qualified according to existing regulations. If he had been, he would have been appointed.

Unfortunately for the marriage, there was a regulation that no person should be appointed to the higher posts of the Customs who was not already in the service, and had not therefore held the lower offices of landing waiter and searcher. To an inquiry on this point, Lord Stowell replies :

With respect to the other condition, that of his carrying of sacks from ships that were unloading, I believe that to

be a qualification which he cannot pretend to, for at the time when he should have been so employed he was at the University of Oxford. If therefore this resolution of the House of Commons is to be considered as decisive, I should be very unwilling to trouble their Lordships any further, only regretting that by this order of the Committee the persons in the higher departments of the Custom House are compelled to begin their career in a state of servile labour which disqualifies them for the character of gentlemen.

The Duke, agreeing with Lord Stowell, writes to Mr. Peel :

The regulation is in my opinion a very bad one. But it is the regulation of the Board of Treasury, of which Lord Liverpool was First Lord, and not of a Committee of the House of Commons.

The consequence is that the Commissioners of Customs have the patronage of the Crown, instead of the First Lord of the Treasury ; and I lately discovered no fewer than three bankrupts among one class of officers in the port of London, whose conduct and character had been inquired into by the Commissioners themselves.

The whole system of the patronage of the Government is in my opinion erroneous. Certain members claim a right to dispose of everything that falls vacant within the town or county which they represent ; and this is so much a matter of right that they now claim the patronage whether they support upon every occasion, or now and then, or when not required, or entirely oppose ; and in fact the only question about local patronage is whether it shall be given to the disposal of one gentleman or another.

Then we have put down one Board entirely, that of Hackney Coaches, and we are diminishing the number of members at every other, having those of Hackney Coaches to provide for, and all those deprived of their seats at other Boards. And taking into consideration the whole state of the patronage of the Government, I really believe that if I were to be in office for ten years I should not be able to perform the only engagement which I have made, viz. to

give Sir John Bridges an office, in consequence of the arrangement which imposed Sir Ulysses Burgh upon Lord Beresford.

Two or three brief notes refer to Scotland.

To Mr. Goulburn.

Drayton Manor: Sept. 24, 1829.

I stayed in Scotland about three weeks, and, notwithstanding the broiling weather, killed a great quantity of grouse, 263 brace in twelve days.

November 8.—What can be the use of a Board of Trustees for the encouragement of manufactures in Scotland? It is, I believe, a job; venerable in point of years.

December 30.—I gave the Lord Advocate no reason to expect a joyful acquiescence on our part in his proposal for increasing the salaries of the Scotch judges.

The more I think of the subject, the more I admire the placid and truly Scotch hardihood of proposing in 1830 to double a demand which was rejected in 1829.

CHAPTER VI.

1830.

Royal Academy Reform—Jewish Disabilities—Prerogative of Mercy—Death of Sir Robert Peel—Death of George IV.—Speech of William IV.—French Revolution—King Charles and King Philip—Revolt of Belgium—General Election—Overtures for Moderate Reform—Rejected by Wellington—Fall of his Administration.

THE year 1830, full of change, public and private, abroad and at home, began tranquilly. The King was in health, meditating reform of the Royal Academy.

To Lord Farnborough.

Jan. 20, 1830.

The King has an impression that it would be desirable to alter the constitution of the Royal Academy, with the view of placing at its head some distinguished amateur of the arts. He wishes, I understand, to have our opinions on this subject.

Writing confidentially to you, I have no hesitation in saying that my present opinion is decidedly adverse to this scheme.

The election of a President comes on Sunday next. Surely it would be very ungracious to step in on Sunday with a notice from the King that he contemplated an alteration, the effect of which would be to transfer the nomination to himself. Seeing, too, that the result of the present mode of nomination has been to place in the chair such men as Sir Joshua Reynolds and Sir Thomas Lawrence, I see no public ground on which the King could be advised to alter it.

From Lord Farnborough.

Jan. 20, 1830.

I entirely agree in every word you have written. Surely the first question one asks upon any proposition to alter an existing establishment is, Has the old one worked well? If it has, why try a new experiment? In the present case the existing institution has answered its purpose. The experiment would be very doubtful indeed.

To Lord Farnborough.

Jan. 27, 1830.

The King was pleased to appoint Wilkie his principal painter, and I think he was right in disposing of that appointment independently of the President of the Royal Academy. You have no doubt heard that the Academy elected Shee.

I told the King that I had conferred with you on his proposal of himself nominating a nobleman to be President of the Academy; that we thought his Majesty stood so well with the artists of this country, that he was so universally admitted to be the greatest patron that Art ever had in England, that it would not be prudent to risk the excitement of any other feelings. The King at once assented, and said, 'Well, perhaps we had better not meddle with the Royal Academy.' He was particularly good-humoured.

On Irish matters a satisfactory report came from the new Lord Lieutenant—one whom Sir Robert Peel afterwards in a farewell letter described as 'the best Chief Governor who ever presided over the affairs of Ireland.'

From the Duke of Northumberland.

Phoenix Park : Jan. 23, 1830.

The tranquillity of Ireland on the whole is increased and increasing. I neither palliate nor deny the too frequent occurrence of acts of brutality and blood. But I consider them as resulting from causes which, although they are

gradually disappearing, will nevertheless for a considerable period to come leave their ill effects behind them.

I cannot close this communication without remarking on the great measure of the last Session of Parliament. I did for a long time doubt the policy of that measure. I became a tardy convert to it. I neither formed nor expressed any prophetic declarations as to its results. But I do most conscientiously, and from the bottom of my heart, declare that the effects of the Relief Bill have surpassed the most sanguine expectations that any reasonable man could have formed with regard to it.

Many persons have watched its progress here with no benignant eye. We have indeed been sneered at because the new law did not work miracles, and efface by the magic of its one enactment the evils of generations. But, so far as I know, no man has yet had the hardihood to assert that any single evil has been engendered or augmented by it.

Has it done all the good the zealots said it would do? To say nothing of social harmony, we have gained the first of all political advantages—unity in the Government, and a power of dealing impartially and fearlessly with every subject as it arises. We have no unnatural balance to adjust, no trimming, to sweeten on one hand the bitterness of exclusion, and on the other hand to conciliate the pretensions of a proud and dominant minority.

To the Duke of Northumberland.

Jan. 27, 1830.

I will for the present content myself with this brief acknowledgment of your Grace's very able and satisfactory confidential communication on the general state of Ireland.

I read it yesterday to my colleagues, who desired me to convey to your Grace the expression of the gratification which they had derived from it. I am just about to send it to his Majesty.

Shortly afterwards the King's health gave ground for apprehensions.

Sir Henry Halford to the Duke of Wellington.

Windsor Castle, 10 o'clock A.M.: March 4, 1830.

The King passed yesterday rather more comfortably, and the night has been a much better one, upon easier terms of medicine. By a good contrivance of pillows and a bed chair, his Majesty was able to take such a posture as permitted him to sleep uninterruptedly a few hours.

In short my account may be construed as a better one, though God knows we have difficulties enough to contend with. It should be confessed at the same time that we have a herculean constitution to work upon.

Early in April, Mr. Peel was called to Drayton by the last illness of his father. During his absence the Government was defeated on the admission of Jews to the House of Commons.

From the Duke of Wellington.

London: April 6, 1830.

Goulburn will have written you an account of the disaster of last night. It came upon me quite unexpected. As far as I could form a judgment from what I heard from others, as well as from what about sixty members of Parliament who dined with me on Saturday and Sunday said, I was inclined to think that we could not have carried the question if we had wished it. It appears, however, not only that there are many of our friends in favour of it, but that, as usual, many, pretending that they did not like to oppose a measure for which they should afterwards be called upon to vote &c., stayed away.

The political importance of the question is one of feeling. This Christian community will not much like to have Jewish magistrates and rulers. In another view it is of importance, as it will be opposed by the Bishops in the House of Lords, and by those lords who dislike innovations. It besides gives a false colouring and throws ridicule

upon the great measures of 1828 and 1829, which it resembles only in name.

I hope you found your father better.

On the second reading Mr. Peel threw out the Jews' Relief Bill. His chief argument against it was one urged many years later by Dr. Arnold, that the admission of Jews, in principle, involved the abandonment of Christianity as part of the constitution. Mr. Peel added that in number the Jews did not exceed thirty thousand.

A few days later a case arose which showed the firmness, promptitude, and tact of the Home Secretary in restraining an attempt on the King's part to exercise the prerogative of mercy without responsible advice.

From the Duke of Northumberland.

Dublin Castle : April 12, 1830.

I was very much surprised this morning by the arrival of a King's messenger from Windsor, bringing the accompanying box of the Colonial Office, with a label addressed to me and marked with the royal initials. There being no habitual intercourse between that office and this Government, I was obliged to force the lock, when I had the honour to find the enclosed letter from his Majesty.

I have now to request that you will tender my most humble duty to his Majesty, informing him that in pursuance of his Majesty's commands I have directed a respite to be made out for Mr. Comyn, for such a period as may enable his Majesty to come to a more regular decision on the subject, grounded upon the purport of the authentic statements which I lately transmitted to you.

I must, however, respectfully take leave to remark that my opinions, anxiously and carefully formed, remain unchanged ; and that, although it is most painful to me to come to such a conclusion, I shall deplore any commutation of the sentence in this case, as tending to countenance

the opinion so mischievously circulated, that in Ireland individual interest is above the general law.

The King to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland.

Windsor Castle : April 10, 1830.

My dear Duke,—Having received a petition from the respectable inhabitants of the county of Clare in favour of Peter Comyn, now under sentence of death for burning his house, and there being some favourable circumstances in his case, I am desirous of exercising the best prerogative of the Crown, that of mercy, in saving his life, leaving to your Grace the commutation of punishment you may think fit.

Your sincere friend,

GEORGE R.

To the Duke of Wellington.

Brighton : April 13, 1830.

To my great surprise I have this morning received the enclosed letter from Sir Frederick Watson, informing me that the King has thought fit, without receiving the advice or opinion of the Secretary of State or any responsible Minister, to write express to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, ordering him to remit the capital sentence on Comyn.

From Comyn's connection with the county of Clare, and his former station in that county, it is pretty evident to what influence this proceeding on the part of the King is attributable.

I have received many applications on the subject of this convict. My uniform answer has been : ' I will not advise the King to interfere in the slightest degree with the discretion of the Lord Lieutenant.' And the same post which brings me a letter from the Lord Lieutenant proving this Comyn to have committed the triple offence of perjury, forgery, and arson, and informing me that he has resolved that the law shall take its course, brings me one from

Windsor, apprising me that the King has actually signified his commands for the remission of the capital sentence.

This is quite intolerable. I have written a letter to the King, of which I send you a copy.

To the King.

April 13, 1830.

I have the honour of receiving a letter from Sir Frederick Watson informing me by your Majesty's commands, that your Majesty had written express to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, signifying your Majesty's pleasure that the sentence of the law should not be carried into execution in the case of a person of the name of Comyn, capitally convicted at the last assizes for the county of Clare.

I feel it to be my painful duty humbly and respectfully to submit to your Majesty that, had your Majesty been pleased to consult me on this occasion, one which I consider of deep interest to the administration of the law in Ireland, I could not have advised your Majesty to command the remission of the capital sentence.

The Lord Lieutenant of Ireland has informed me by a letter received this morning, that his Grace has given the most serious consideration to the case of Comyn, that he has consulted with the law officers of the Crown upon it, and that it is his opinion that on account of the very aggravated character of the offence of which Comyn was convicted, on account of the state of Ireland generally with reference to that offence, and of the county of Clare in particular, the law ought to be permitted to take its course. His Grace adds : ' If the worst features of Whiteboyism be pardoned in a gentleman, merely as such, we shall in vain attempt to restrain the vindictive passions of the more humble tenantry, whose conspiracy to obstruct the due demise of land is perhaps the greatest evil in this country.'

I feel myself bound humbly to state to your Majesty my concurrence in these observations of the Lord Lieutenant, and my apprehensions of the serious consequences

which will arise should the capital sentence of the law be remitted.

I will, with your Majesty's gracious permission, forbear from making any further communication to your Majesty connected with this subject until I shall have again heard from the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland.

From the Duke of Wellington.

London : April 14, 1830.

I was much concerned to find that his Majesty had taken so inconsiderate a step. I was in hopes that I had tranquillised the anxiety expressed at Windsor respecting Mr. Comyn's case, and had taken the best measures to set right the misrepresentations which had been made on the subject.

The Duke of Northumberland appears to me to have done exactly as he ought; and I recommend to you to bring the whole case under the King's view, and to advise him to allow the law to take its course.

I am going to Windsor this morning in order to see how the King is. I will say nothing about Mr. Comyn, unless they should talk to me about it, and then only to censure their folly.

Half-past six P.M.—I have just now returned from Windsor. The King is very unwell, but I saw him, and I don't think that he is so unwell as he is represented to be by the residents of the Palace.

He complained, when I saw him, of pain, and said he thought he was going to have a serious fit of gout and rheumatism. He did not look very ill, nor was he out of spirits. He was in very good humour, notwithstanding that he had taken above 250 drops of laudanum in the last thirty-six hours.

I did not talk to him about business of any kind. I understand, however, that he is quite prepared to receive and act in conformity with any suggestion that may be made to him respecting the affair of Mr. Comyn.

To the Duke of Wellington.

Brighton: April 14, 1830 (half-past eight).

I have written to the King, advising his Majesty to permit the law to take its course.

I have written to the Lord Lieutenant, informing him that I have given this advice, and requesting him to caution Comyn against entertaining any hope of mercy.

Of course I shall come to town any moment that you may send for me, or in case your report of the King's health is unfavourable.

I hope Lord Conyngham has not had the folly to intimate to Comyn through any channel, direct or indirect, what has taken place at Windsor.

To the King.

I beg leave humbly to represent to your Majesty that I have received a letter from the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland informing me that, in pursuance of your Majesty's letter addressed directly to his Grace on April 10, his Grace has ordered a temporary respite to be made out for Comyn, for the purpose of enabling your Majesty to give further consideration to this case.

His Grace desires me to tender his most humble duty and to inform your Majesty most respectfully that his opinions, anxiously and carefully formed, remained unchanged.

I have every reason to believe that Comyn not only deliberately and maliciously burned the house of which he was in the occupation, but that he swore against three innocent men as the perpetrators of the felony for which he himself was convicted.

Under these circumstances I consider it to be my painful but imperative duty humbly to tender my advice to your Majesty that the law should be permitted to take its course by the execution of the capital sentence.

From Sir William Knighton.

Windsor Castle: Thursday night, April 15, 1830.

I am honoured with the commands of the King to send you his Majesty's very kind regards, and to acquaint you that his Majesty desires that the law should take its course with respect to Comyn, by the execution of the capital sentence.

From the Duke of Northumberland.

Dublin Castle: April 18, 1830.

The messenger duly delivered to me yesterday evening the very satisfactory letter from Windsor.

It only remains for me to thank you for the very prompt and kind support which, in conjunction with the Duke of Wellington, you have been pleased to give me on this occasion.

Early in May, Mr. Peel was again summoned from his arduous duties to his father's bedside.

Mr. Croker writes:

May 3, 1830.

Sir Robert Peel has had a relapse, and Peel has gone down again to Drayton, leaving us not only without a general to lead us, but even without one fighting man, for he is himself our host. The House of Commons cannot, I think, fail to be impressed with the talent he has lately shown as leader. His single speech has every night supported the whole debate on our side.

The same day, by his father's death, Mr. Peel succeeded to the baronetcy, to Drayton Manor, and to an ample fortune. Within a fortnight he returned to his post.

To Mr. Goulburn.

Drayton Manor: May 12, 1830.

I hope to be in town on Friday evening. I am very unwilling to be absent, even for a day, but I am an executor

to my father's will, and have immediate and very urgent directions to give.

My father's intentions were, thank God, clearly expressed in his will, and I believe that all his family are perfectly satisfied by the disposition which he made of his property.

The funeral, from the voluntary concourse of people to show respect, was a very affecting ceremony.

Ever affectionately yours,

ROBERT PEEL.

The King's illness had now become grave.

To Mr. Hobhouse.

May 1, 1830.

I think it right to inform you that the state of the King's health is such that we must be prepared for the possibility of a sudden termination of his life.

The King's disorder is dropsy. The water first affected the movement of the heart, I apprehend, then escaped into the lower parts of the body.

To the Duke of Wellington.

Drayton Manor : May 12, 1830.

I am much obliged to you for Halford's letters. They confirm my previous impressions as to the possibility of the fatal termination of the King's illness taking place at a very early period.

I am, with my brother William, executor to my father's will, and a vast quantity of business has devolved upon us. Nothing but necessity should have detained me here to-morrow. I hope to be in town on Friday evening, and I shall postpone any attention to my own concerns until after the prorogation.

Early in June the King's condition was hopeless, and his Ministers began preparing an address to be spoken by his successor.

From the Duke of Wellington.

June 8, 1830.

I enclose a copy of what King George the Fourth said to his Council, and a draft of the proposed address, which I beg you to revise and alter as you think best.

On June 26 came the end.

Sir Henry Halford to the Duke of Wellington.

Windsor Castle: a quarter past three o'clock, Saturday morning.

The King is dead. It pleased God to take his Majesty away from us at fifteen minutes past three o'clock. He expired without pain.

The Duke writes briefly:

My dear Peel, circulate these. Everything shall go on as we before settled.

Ever yours,
WELLINGTON.

The accession of William the Fourth threw on the Home Secretary much formal business, such as arrangements for presenting addresses and preparation of answers. In one instance, the King saved him trouble by replying offhand, but submitted a report for revision.

From Sir Herbert Taylor.

(*Private.*)

St. James's Palace: July 17, 1830.

His Majesty has ordered me to send you the address of the Dean and Canons of Windsor, which his Majesty answered verbally and offhand; and he has since, at their request, endeavoured to recollect and to put down the substance of his answer, which I am commanded to enclose to you also. His Majesty requests you will have the goodness to bring the latter into proper shape, and to alter it as you please, retaining as much as you can of the original sentiments and expressions.

Offhand public utterances of a monarch of these realms are so rare as to give interest to the impromptu answer of the Sailor King.

Speech by King William.

Mr. Dean, and Canons of my Free Chapel of St. George,— I thank you for this dutiful and loyal Address, and I participate most cordially and sincerely with you in the deep regret which you have so properly and feelingly expressed for the loss of our most excellent and lamented Sovereign, my dearly beloved and never to be forgotten brother.

Amongst the many proofs of regard and affection conferred upon me by my late revered father, George the Third, for which I feel the deepest gratitude, there is not one, to which I am bound to attach a higher value, than the education he bestowed upon me, which has enabled me to obtain a peculiar knowledge of the British character, to appreciate justly the advantages of our Constitution, and to acquire habits strictly conformable to those principles which constitute the strength and glory of these realms, and upon which the prosperity of its valuable institutions mainly rests.

I rejoice in being the son of that revered Monarch, in having had the opportunity of benefiting by the examples of my excellent father and deeply regretted brother.

I establish myself in the Castle, which has been the residence of the Sovereigns of this country from the earliest periods of its glorious annals, and I do so with the proud feelings that I am an Englishman, and that I occupy a palace which the munificence and liberality of my people have rendered so fit for the Monarch of the greatest country in the world, and where I feel proud of being at the head of the most honourable and most noble Order of the Garter.

Gentlemen, I assure you collectively and individually, and I pledge myself to you from the bottom of my heart, that I am prepared and determined to support and uphold

the reformed religion as by law established in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, and to maintain unimpaired those blessings inherent in the Constitution of this country, of which I am become the guardian. I feel that it is to the principles of the Reformation brought about by Henry the Eighth, that this country is indebted, under the blessing of God, for its present elevated station of happiness, splendour, and glory; and I look back with satisfaction and pride to that period which preceded the immediate connection of my family with the sovereignty of these realms, when my ancestors boldly and manfully stood up for the same principles. I have now only to add my satisfaction that the care of maintaining these valuable objects, as more immediately connected with this Royal Residence, is entrusted to the body whose address I have this day received.

The Minister, with a well-turned compliment, abstained from any but the most necessary alterations.

To Sir Herbert Taylor.

Whitehall : July 18, 1830.

I return the excellent answer of his Majesty, which appears to me to admit of no addition or improvement.

I would suggest only the omission of direct reference to Henry the Eighth as the prime author of the Reformation :

When love first taught a monarch to be wise,
And Gospel light had flashed from Boleyn's eyes.

I have also suggested the substitution of the words ' the House of Hanover ' for ' my family,' and have stated the reason for it. By family connection his Majesty has been time out of mind connected with the sovereignty of these realms.

I have just sent the King drafts of answers to the University Addresses.

Pleased with such approval, the King adopted the amendments as judicious, and in return pronounced his Minister's answers to the Universities to be 'very good.'

On July 24, owing to the demise of the Crown, Parliament was dissolved, and the results of the general election were unfavourable to ministerial candidates. Amongst those who lost their seats were two brothers of Sir Robert Peel, his brother-in-law Dawson, and his friend Croker.

Some Ministerialists were defeated by Ultra-Tories, bent on revenge for Catholic Emancipation. In other cases Whig candidates profited by a demand for parliamentary reform, stimulated by revolution in France. For during the first days of the General Election came news of the outbreak at Paris which dethroned Charles X.

From the Duke of Wellington.

London : July 31, 1830.

I don't know whether anybody writes you the accounts of the reports which reach us from Paris through Rothschild. We have nothing from Lord Stuart, as it appears from Rothschild's accounts that no courier is allowed to depart. Their servants with their own horses carry their letters the first stage from Paris. The family are living at Suresne, two or three miles from Paris.

The last account is of the 29th at night. There has been a terrible massacre in the streets, but it appears that the troops had had the worst of it. The *drapeau tricolore* was flying upon the Tuileries, and upon the column in the Place Vendôme. La Fayette had taken the command of the Garde Nationale. He and General Gérard, Loban, La Fitte, and another were the Provisional Government of Paris. Some of the troops of the line had gone over, according to the accounts of yesterday, but surrendered, according to the accounts of this day. Although the *drapeau tricolore* was flying on the 29th, the Guards were still fighting in the Rue St. Honoré.

The King was at St. Cloud, with a large body of troops, and all his Ministers. The Ministers had been blocked up

in the Tuileries, but had escaped by the subterranean passages. The Tuileries had been plundered.

From Lord Aberdeen.

Foreign Office : July 31, 1830.

I send the despatches from Lord Stuart. All the rumours of yesterday are confirmed. Paris is in possession of the National Guard, and of the people. La Fayette has resumed the station which he held forty years ago, and everything else appears to follow in the same course. The only question now to be decided is whether a monarchy under any form will be preserved, or whether we must again see a republic.

To Lord Aberdeen.

(*Private.*)

Aug. 9, 1830.

I called yesterday for the purpose of suggesting to you whether it might not be advantageous to send some one in your entire confidence over to Paris, for the purpose of conferring with Lord Stuart, and bringing back to you an accurate and full report of the state of Paris, and of the different parties who are contending for the Government of France. Lord Stuart's letters on these heads are meagre in the extreme.

Correspondence ensued on questions raised by the Revolution. Sir Robert Peel saw at once the propriety of giving asylum to the outcast monarch, and of recognising, but not too effusively, the new King.

To Lord Aberdeen.

(*Private.*)

Drayton Manor : Aug. 18, 1830.

My opinion is that we ought to permit the late King of France to seek an asylum here, if he earnestly desires it. I think we ought to consider his abdication a complete one, and not receive him as King of France ; that there ought to be a distinct and unequivocal declaration made to him in writing, admitting of production if necessary hereafter, explaining the grounds and conditions upon which we

receive him. He ought to give an assurance that he merely seeks an asylum in this country from his misfortunes, and to disclaim all intention of availing himself of its vicinity to France for the purpose of disturbing the order of things now established there, apparently with the consent of a vast majority of the people of France.

Aug. 19.—I think with you that there can be no doubt as to the answers we ought to return to the communications from France, that we ought to recognise the Government of King Philip, and receive its flag with the accustomed honours.

Under any circumstances I know not what other course could be pursued, but under present circumstances it appears to me that the best chance of preserving the form and shadow even of monarchical institutions in France, is to acknowledge without delay Philip the Seventh, and to treat him in all respects as King of France. I do not see why our acknowledgment should have the appearance of a reluctant and extorted acknowledgment. I would not make it either too warm or too cold and formal.

Our true policy is to maintain a dignified position for ourselves, but studiously to avoid every act which could give just cause of offence, or alienation and jealousy, to France. If we are to be committed against France in hostilities (which God avert), there never was a moment when it was of more vital importance that the cause of quarrel should be universally felt throughout the country to be a just one.

From Lord Aberdeen.

Foreign Office : Aug. 20, 1830.

As yet we scarcely possess certain knowledge of the existence of King Philip, and it would show unnecessary impatience if we were to send a recognition to Paris, before the arrival in London of the messenger of the new King.

I entirely agree with you, however, in thinking that there ought to be no delay, and there can be no doubt that we shall be the first Power in Europe to recognise him.

Indeed, in following this course perhaps we deviate a

little from the letter of our treaties, according to which we ought to concert together and act in common.

At the same time it is evidently so important to the stability of the new Government, and through it to the only chance of peace, that there should be no appearance of hesitation, that I am persuaded we shall deserve the thanks of our allies.

I fear that the republican spirit is gaining ground, and is likely to prove too strong for the Government.

We have no chance, nor has Europe any chance, of acting with effect, unless we shall be clearly in the right, in which case we may look to the support of the country, and I doubt not that the necessary union of the Great Powers will again prove too much for France to contend with.

The next two months were full of unrest. Revolution in France was followed by revolution in Belgium. Sir Henry Hardinge, now Chief Secretary, apprehended outbreaks in Ireland. The 87th Regiment quartered there showed a mutinous spirit. In England there was much active discontent. Near Carlisle one Johnson was preaching rebellion. In Kent serious disturbances arose. The Artillery were marched to Maidstone.

From Lord Aberdeen.

I send you some of the Hague reports. The question has now assumed a new and most important character. The policy of a separation [of Belgium from Holland] is to be discussed, with the sanction of the King.

No separation can take place without an appeal being made to the European Powers, by whom the kingdom in its present form was constituted. The question interests all Europe. We must be prepared to receive the King's demand, and fully to consider the subject.

If the affair should be settled in the manner which is desired by the authors of the revolt, we cannot conceal from ourselves that it will be a virtual annexation of the Provinces to France. Is this country, or any party in this country, prepared to submit to such a result? We may

do what we please, but I feel confident that, sooner or later, we shall find in the Netherlands the cause of war. Fortunately it will be a good one.

To Sir Henry Hardinge.

(Private.)

Aug. 24, 1830.

There is always something in an Irish transaction peculiar to itself. With all my experience in Irish commotions I was not quite prepared to hear that the Coroner was the man to supply the populace with gunpowder, and 'casks of leaden pellets.'

I have been very much amused by the fate of Lawless. I have seen few things equal to his defence of the purity of the motives of the mob that attacked him, and his very delicate contradiction of his own agent's assertion, that Mr. Lawless had received a bribe of four thousand pounds. His compliment at the same time to the candour of the agent who had spread this report is characteristic.

September 13.—The worst intelligence that you can send from Ireland is of the attempt to assassinate those in the superior ranks of society.

The demons of Tipperary have learnt the real secret of effectual intimidation, and I am confident there have been more attempts in that county, and particularly in the neighbourhood of Cashel, than in all the rest of Ireland.

The man who could face a riotous and desperate mob, and risk his life in open combat, shrinks very naturally from the danger of private assassination. Unfortunately the combinations of the well-disposed, the meetings of magistrates, the armings for self-defence, and mutual pledges of co-operation, afford no real security against the well-concerted schemes of a very few assassins. There have been many escapes from justice and even from detection in Tipperary, and when justice has followed it has been often *pede claudo*—limping after the assassins at so long an interval and so tardy a pace that the horror and almost the remembrance of the original offence has been obliterated before the execution of the offenders.

I wish you could devise some remedy for this worst of Irish evils.

Oct. 6.—I have had a good deal of conversation with the Duke of Wellington since I received your letter with regard to Sheil.

We attach great importance to the detachment of him from the faction of O'Connell, and to the services which he might render in opposition to O'Connell. We quite agree with you in thinking that we ought not to infuse into the question of the Repeal of the Union any religious feeling—not to make it a question between Protestant and Catholic, but to court the alliance of the Catholics in resisting the mad project.

But we dread a parliamentary connection with Sheil. That is, we dread being instrumental in effecting his return, and thereby assuming the responsibility of whatever vagaries he may hereafter commit. We have no confidence in the discretion of Irish orators, and (between ourselves) the communication made to you by Sheil does not encourage much confidence in his political honesty.

He makes a reservation on the score of reform, which he calls moderate reform. But this very question of reform may be the all-important vital question.

Oct. 20.—You must open the press upon the subject of the Union, and employ all the argument, but especially all the ridicule you can command, against the project of Repeal.

There was a paper in 1799, supported by Plunket, Bushe, and others, called 'The Anti-Union.' Why not establish one to be called 'The Union'? Hold up O'Connell and his partisans weekly to cutting sarcasm and ridicule. Confirm the just fears that are entertained on account of the predominance of a set of sanguinary, lack-land, bankrupt agitators, backed by a mob. Give a picture of Liège, of Brussels, aye of Paris and Bordeaux, under an established Government, and compare it with the effects of revolution. Get the details as to Liège and other places from the Foreign Office, the downfall of the

regular authorities, the short rule of the bourgeois and moderates, their supersession by the sans-culottes and anarchists.

Rice's report on the Poor Laws in Ireland, showing the increase of trade, navigation, &c., contrasting the present state of Ireland with its state before the Union, will be very valuable. Show what is the state of the charitable establishments of Ireland under the control of the Imperial Parliament, compared with their state under the local legislature.

You must convince the Protestants that the repeal of the Union means the repeal of the Act of Settlement, and yet you must take the Catholics with you in your resistance to it. But you must have all the Protestants on your side.

The lamentable death of Mr. Huskisson at the opening of the Liverpool and Manchester Railway led to a proposal that Sir Robert Peel should be nominated for the vacant seat in Liverpool. This he courteously declined as being too heavy an addition to the duties of office.

To Thomas C. Porter, Esq.

Whitehall: Oct. 4, 1830.

To be thought worthy of succeeding Mr. Canning and Mr. Huskisson in the representation of Liverpool, is one of the highest proofs of public esteem and confidence which any man could receive.

I feel it, however, incumbent upon me not to leave you in ignorance of the course which I shall feel it necessary to pursue, in case such a requisition as that of which you speak should be presented to me. After a mature consideration of the subject, my resolution is taken to forego the honour of representing Liverpool—to forego it even if it should be within my reach without contest. Mr. Canning relinquished it when it was in his possession, for reasons which operate certainly with greater force against the original acceptance of it.

Whilst I remain in the situation which the King's confidence at present assigns to me, I feel that I could not satisfactorily discharge, from the want of time, particularly during the Session of Parliament, both the duties of public office and the duties which I should owe to my constituents at Liverpool. To neglect either, or to devolve the performance of either upon other persons, would be a source of constant uneasiness and dissatisfaction to myself.

Writing to you with perfect unreserve, I may also add that I think that a minister of the Crown has an advantage in being free from the double, occasionally perhaps the conflicting, obligations which are imposed by high responsible office and by such a trust as the representation of Liverpool.

I may probably be more sensitive than others on this point, after the penalty which I have paid for the discharge of what appeared to me an imperative public duty. I allude of course to the withdrawal of its confidence by the University of Oxford.

The new Parliament met in late October. Events abroad had stimulated the demand for better representation of the people at home, and on the eve of the first debate Sir Robert Peel received a confidential offer of much-needed reinforcement for the Government, on conditions; the chief condition being that in response to public feeling they should bring in a moderate measure of Reform, giving at least some voice in Parliament to Manchester, Birmingham, and Leeds. On these terms they might have the support of Lord Palmerston, of Lord Stanley, and of Sir James Graham. Failing such concession, all three would oppose the Government, and the friendly influence of the Stafford family would be withdrawn.

From Mr. Arbuthnot.

Nov. 1, 1830.

I met Littleton in the street, and he told me that he wanted very much to speak to me. I agreed to receive him, and he came to me.

He began by saying that he wished through me to make a communication to the Duke of Wellington and Sir Robert

Peel ; that he should have no objection to make it in person to either of them, but that he had selected me as a person who would repeat what he had to say faithfully ; and that he should not expect me to give him any answer.

He said there was not a person throughout the country who did not speak highly of the Duke and of Peel, but that it must be known to me that in many other respects the Government was felt to be deplorably inefficient. In short, it was obvious that the Duke required additional strength, and he knew that such strength could be obtained at the expense of some concessions, which he did not imagine there would be any difficulty in granting.

It was upon five points that satisfactory explanation would be required, and these were—the Civil List, the Regency, the China Trade, Parliamentary Reform, and prospectively an arrangement to prevent pluralities in civil offices. He did not believe that in respect to the Civil List, the Regency, the China Trade, or, indeed, the pluralities in civil offices, there would be any difference of opinion.

Upon the subject of Parliamentary Reform the whole difficulty would turn.

He could hardly suppose that the Duke of Wellington was not aware that the general sense of the country was now in favour of a moderate Reform, and he knew that strength to the Government might be obtained by consenting to Lord J. Russell's plan, or even to the giving members now to the three great towns, and hereafter to other great towns, whenever there should be such proof of corruption as would cause the disfranchisement of some borough.

He then adverted to the political unions which were now spreading in all the manufacturing districts, and read to me part of a letter representing in very strong terms the mischief those unions were producing.

He assured me solemnly that he had not been desired by any one to communicate with the Government ; but still he could take upon himself to say that if the Government would agree to the very moderate Parliamentary Reform

which he had described, and could give satisfactory explanation upon the other four points, Lord Palmerston, the Grants, Sir James Graham, and Stanley would join the Duke immediately.

In conclusion he informed me that he had been commissioned by Lady Stafford to say to the Duke of Wellington, that unless a moderate Parliamentary Reform was intended by the Government, Lord Stafford and all belonging to him must go into opposition.

When Littleton had finished speaking, I said to him that I should act as he had desired, and not utter one word to him except to assure him that I would report as faithfully and as accurately as I could all that had been told me.

He went out, but returned almost immediately. He then said that Palmerston had written to inform him of the interview he had had with the Duke.¹ Indeed it was from particular circumstances in which he had been concerned that Palmerston could not have done otherwise than give him such information ; but in giving it he had urged secrecy, and had observed that when such communications were made, as the one from the Duke, it was a point of honour not to divulge. He was positive, therefore, that the secret had been kept to all other persons ; but, as he had just intimated, there was a necessity for his being an exception.

I observed to Littleton that had he not mentioned the interview between the Duke and Lord Palmerston, I should never have alluded to it ; but that certainly I had imagined, although no one was named, that Brougham and the Whigs generally were those referred to, when a more extended junction was represented as necessary.

‘ No such thing,’ said Littleton instantly. ‘ They look to Brougham and the Whigs just as little as you do. If the Duke is prepared to do what I have pointed out, he may have Palmerston and the Grants, and also Sir J. Graham and Stanley. Sir James has said it to me, and Stanley said it to me this morning. Indeed, I observed to Stanley

¹ See Bulwer's *Palmerston*, i. 382, 383.

that they would be exposed to all Brougham's attacks, but for this he did not care at all. He felt that by joining with Palmerston and the Grants he should be sufficiently covered, and Sir J. Graham had the same feeling. He did not know that Stanley wanted high office, or office at all, at present, but he should say it would be wise to put him in office, as he would be most useful to Peel as an every-day man.'

This opportune and friendly overture was communicated, as the letter shows, to the Duke of Wellington. Yet next day, November 2, the Duke delivered in the House of Lords his well-known speech, declaring absolutely against Reform. 'The existing system of representation,' he said, 'possessed the entire confidence of the country, and not only was he not prepared to bring forward any measure whatever of reform, but he should always feel it his duty to resist such measures when proposed by others.' The effect of the speech on a colleague has been thus described :

'When the Duke resumed his seat, he turned to Lord Aberdeen, who sat beside him, and said: "I have not said too much, have I?" Lord Aberdeen put his chin forward, with a gesture habitual to him when much moved, and only replied, "You'll hear of it." After leaving the House he was asked what the Duke had said. "He said that we were going out," was the reply.'²

Next day there was great anxiety to learn whether the flat refusal of the Prime Minister to meet in any way the general demand for Reform, or even acknowledge its existence, would be supported by his colleagues. Their utterances were various, but all of lower pitch than the Duke's. The Colonial Secretary, Sir George Murray, engaged to listen attentively to any propositions that might be made. Lord Francis Gower admitted that 'though his opinion on Parliamentary Reform was unchanged, he saw as plainly as any man the tide which ran so strong in favour of it in the country.' Sir Robert Peel confined himself to 'making one or two observations.'

² *The Earl of Aberdeen*, by Sir Arthur Gordon.

‘ He had never hitherto taken a very decided part. Opposed to Reform he certainly had been, but (with very few exceptions) he had contented himself with a silent vote. He saw difficulties about the question which he was by no means prepared to solve. He wished to say nothing that might in any degree prejudice the discussion hereafter, but he did not at present see any prospect that such a measure of safe moderate reform as the Government might be inclined to sanction would satisfy the demands or expectations of the reformers.’

Such being his attitude, private inquiry was once more made whether he would entertain the proposed alliance with moderate reformers. But Peel would not break with Wellington, and Wellington had pledged himself against Reform.

From Mr. Arbuthnot.

Nov. 5, 1830.

Littleton asked me last night in the House of Commons if I had anything to say to him. I answered that I had nothing to tell him; and he observed that he expected it would be so, as the door was now shut against junction. I dare say you know it as well as I do, but the ‘slip’ of Sir George Murray has damaged us dreadfully, for the common talk is that we are divided.

If one looked solely to personal comfort, the sooner the *coup de grâce* were given the better, but it is very galling to be defeated, and with an Ultra-Liberal Government in France. What a prospect for England, if we are now to have the convulsion of a change here at home! The Whigs are pledged to do so much, that they could only stand by doing far more than would be safe. Were it not for this stumbling-block of Reform in our way, I should now at this last hour earnestly pray that a junction with talents in speaking could be made.

The Duke remaining firm, popular resentment ran so high that personal violence to him was apprehended. A proposed visit of the King, with his Ministers, to the City was postponed, and the funds showed a heavy fall.

A few notes on this occasion are of interest as recording the efficiency of the new police.

To the King.

Home Office: Nov. 9, 1830 (half-past six).

I shall have the honour of reporting to your Majesty from time to time, whenever there may be anything interesting in regard to the state of the town.

There was about six o'clock a considerable assemblage about the House of Lords; but when it became tumultuous, it was easily dispersed by the new police.

I hear that there are bands of one or two hundred of the lower classes traversing different parts of the town. The police have fallen in with them, and have had no difficulty in dispersing them. But as the following of them fatigues the police, I have ordered a detachment of the horse patrol, under the control of a magistrate, to watch any assemblage of mob that seems intent on plunder. The principal assemblage will probably be at the Rotunda: Carlile will harangue the people there this evening. There will be a considerable number, perhaps 2,000, in the interior of the building, and a very large collection of persons on the outside. I have desired a magistrate to repair to this meeting, to prevent, if possible, by the ordinary police constables, and special constables, the commencement of the assembly of the mob on the outside—to treat them in the first instance as a nuisance by obstructing the highway. If the numbers increase, and the mob become at all formidable either by numbers or violence, I have desired him to read the Riot Act, and have made arrangements for having at hand two detachments of cavalry, each under the command of a magistrate.

There will be a magistrate all night at each of the police offices, a magistrate in attendance on each considerable body of troops, and four magistrates at the Home Office.

From the King.

St. James' Palace: Nov. 9, 1830 (half-past seven P.M.).

The King has this instant received Sir Robert Peel's letter, and approves entirely of the arrangements adopted by the Home Secretary of State, and trusts the excellent new police will be able to keep the public peace without having recourse to the military.

From the Duke of Wellington.

London: Nov. 9, 1830 (twenty minutes before eight).

I am at home, and have dined, and will go down to the Home Office as soon as I shall learn that you are there.

I don't think that this mob in Catherine Street can be ten thousand, or that it is going to attack the police office in Whitehall Place.

We are all quiet hereabouts, but there are a great many people in the street, indeed so many that I doubt its being practicable for me to go out of the front door without bringing a mob through the park with me. In the course of a short time I shall be able to get out by the Hyde Park gate, and thence into St. James's Park.

To the King.

Nov. 9, 1830 (nine o'clock).

I understand that there is beyond Temple Bar a very considerable mob, consisting, it is said, of many thousands, but I find a great disposition to exaggerate numbers. The mob is kept in check by the new police, several of whom have been severely hurt by stones.

(Half-past eleven P.M.)

The mob in the Strand is gradually dispersing, and the Rotunda is closed. There seems every reason to believe that the public peace will not be disturbed.

A few days later, the Government, beaten unexpectedly on a motion relating to the Civil List to be granted to the new King, used the opportunity to resign on that question rather than on Reform. By their advice the King sent for Earl Grey, and he took office on condition of being authorised to bring in a Reform Bill.

It was now the turn of the extreme Tories—their thirst for vengeance being in some degree allayed, and their fears roused by the prospect of Whig or Radical domination—to approach Sir Robert Peel. An undated letter, found among Mr. Goulburn's papers of 1830, appears to have been written shortly after the resignation. It relates apparently to an overture from old Tories.

To Mr. Goulburn.

[No date, but tied up in the Betchworth Papers with those of 1830.]

My dear Goulburn,—In the first place I would not abandon any one opinion I entertain in order to conciliate Ultra-Tory support. I positively, as I told Sir R. Vyvyan, would not advance, so far as abandonment of opinion is concerned, on the currency question for instance, one single yard, to gain a whole party.

In the second place I feel a want of many essential qualifications which are requisite in party leaders, among the rest personal gratification in the game of politics, and patience to listen to the sentiments of individuals whom it is equally imprudent to neglect and an intolerable bore to consult.

In the third place, at the moment that newspapers are speculating upon my love of office and eager appetite for the return to it, I regard the return to it under any circumstances with feelings of growing aversion.

The ready reply to all this is the sacrifice a man must make for the good of the country.

Very true, but no man is worth having as a political leader who does not feel real pleasure in the pursuit of the

game, and who looks upon the confinement, occupations, ceremony, and dependence of office as I regard them all.

However, I am writing to yourself only. I have no wish to slight the offers of new party adherents, or to offend those who make them. But I shall be very cautious in contracting any new party engagements.

Ever most affectionately yours,

ROBERT PEEL.

At this time, after the schism between extreme and moderate Tories, doubts were felt as to Peel's continued willingness to serve the party. This appears curiously in a memorandum dated in 1831, but relating to the autumn of 1830. If the writer's accuracy can be trusted, Wellington himself was under the impression that Peel had announced to him a determination not to remain in office after Christmas. The belief was unfounded, but it would show that on this point Wellington did not know Peel's mind. The Duke himself had in June 1830 proposed to retire. ('Despatches,' vii. 108.)

Memorandum by Mr. Croker.

Dec. 1, 1831.

In talking with Arbuthnot of the difficulties which beset the Duke's Government last autumn, and regretting the schism amongst the Tories which had broken it up, he mentioned as an additional cause, very important but little known, that Peel had announced to the Duke and, as I understood him, also to Arbuthnot, *his fixed determination* not to continue in office beyond the then approaching Christmas. He did not assign any political motives for this resolution, but seemed to put it altogether on personal weariness of office and a desire to enjoy a little domestic quiet, and perhaps to travel. But whatever was the motive, *the resolution was immutably taken.*

It was so obvious that Peel's retirement must break up the Government, which I could not believe he could wish to do, that I suspected Arbuthnot must have misunderstood him, and so, going down at the end of October to Sudbourn

with the Duke, I turned the conversation to this point, expressing some doubt about it. He at once and in the fullest way confirmed Arbuthnot's story; but could give, or even guess, no other reason than the vague ones before stated. I still expressed great surprise, and inquired whether Peel had contemplated how his place was to be supplied; and whether he did not see that his retreat would be the dissolution of the whole Government.

'No,' said the Duke, 'he entered into no such considerations; he confined his view to his own individual conduct, and *we* were all of us to act, when the time came, as we might think best; at least nothing of the kind—supplying his place—appeared to have entered into his contemplation.'

This seemed decisive; but though I knew that Peel felt deeply the consequences of his share in the Catholic question, I had seen both in his conduct and conversation so little of a desire to retreat from the responsibility of his position that I could not but suspect a mistake, and again spoke to Arbuthnot at Sudbourn, who repeated that positively there was no mistake.

Last night, however, sitting alone with Peel, and talking of party and politics and future prospects, of which he seems to think better than I do, I happened to mention what the Duke had told me, and asked him what was the motive of that intended retirement, of which I had never had any suspicion.

He appeared as surprised as I had been when I heard it, and positively denied that he had made any such communication, or entertained any such idea, and he assured me that he heard of it for the first time.

J. W. C.

CHAPTER VII.

1831-2.

Parliamentary Reform—Views of Chatham, Pitt, Canning, Peel—First Reform Bill—Majority of One—General Election—Affair of Honour—Second Reform Bill—The Waverers—Bill rejected by the Lords—Popular Violence—Armed Defence—Third Reform Bill—Lords oppose—Ministers resign—The King pledged to Extensive Reform—Wellington consents to bring in an Extensive Bill—Peel refuses—Opposition of Peers withdrawn—The Bill becomes Law.

THE next two years were those of the great contest over Parliamentary Reform.

The state of popular representation had long been anomalous. The English counties had always returned each two members, and so had boroughs that were of note in the time of Henry the Eighth, except a few, such as Manchester and Sheffield. But the later Tudor kings had issued writs to petty communities, mostly in Cornwall, chosen apparently as being easy to control—‘wretched villages,’ says Hallam (an opponent of the Reform Bill), ‘which corruption and perjury hardly keep from famine.’ And now for generations, the prerogative having fallen into disuse, no changes had been made by King or Parliament, but many by time.

Old boroughs had decayed, and new towns had risen to importance, but the franchise had not been taken from the one or given to the other. Constituencies had come to look on their electoral rights as property. Seats in Parliament were for sale. Many members were nominated by the Treasury, or by private patrons. Mr. Grey asserted in the House of Commons without contradiction that a majority of its members were returned by 160 persons.

The first Minister to approve reform of this was Chatham.

The petty boroughs he admitted to be 'the rotten part of our Constitution.' He would not extirpate them. 'Like the infirmities of the body, we must bear them with patience.' But to counterbalance their corrupting influence and 'infuse new health into the Constitution,' he proposed to add to every county a third member.

Pitt, before the French Revolution, revived this project of his father. He pointed out the great anomaly that decayed villages, almost destitute of population, should send members to Parliament, under the control of the Treasury, or at the bidding of some great Lord or Commoner, the owner of the soil, and he asked emphatically, 'Is this representation?' He proposed also to appropriate a million sterling to buy up the electoral privileges of thirty-six 'rotten boroughs,' with a view to dividing them between the metropolis and the counties. But Pitt after the French Revolution entirely changed his mind, and expressed 'a most decided opinion that, even if the times were proper for experiments, any, even the slightest, change in the Constitution must be considered an evil.'

Canning was, in Sir Robert Peel's words, 'the uncompromising foe of all Parliamentary reform.' He went so far as to condemn effectual representation. A House of Commons that should be 'a direct effectual representative of the people,' he held, 'would constitute a pure democracy, and must in a few days' sitting sweep away every other branch of the Constitution that might attempt to oppose or control it.' So it had been in 1648, when it was resolved that 'the Commons of England, assembled in Parliament, being chosen by and representing the people, have the supreme authority of this nation.' 'In a few weeks the House of Lords was voted useless, and in a few more we all know what became of the Crown.' And so it would be again. 'When once the House of Commons should become a mere deputation, speaking the people's will, by what assumption of right could three or four hundred great proprietors set themselves against the national will?' (Speech at Liverpool, 1820.)

Nor was Canning's mind changed by alliance with the Whigs. As Prime Minister, being challenged on this point, he replied, a few weeks only before his death: 'I am asked what I mean to do on the subject of Parliamentary Reform. Why, I say, to oppose it, to oppose it to the end of my life in this House, under whatever

shape it may appear. I hope I have spoken out.' ('Hansard,' vol. xvii. p. 541.)

Peel's objections to 'effectual' representation of the people were less pronounced than Canning's. As early as in 1820 he had written to Croker :

Can we resist for seven years Reform in Parliament? And if Reform cannot be resisted, is it not more probable that Whigs and Tories will unite, and carry through Reform, than remain opposed to each other?

Ten years later he had rejected overtures for such union from Palmerston, Stanley, and Graham.

But while Canning had opposed, Peel had supported the transfer of a seat from a corrupt Cornish borough to Manchester. And in December 1830, being no longer bound officially to Wellington, he had declared in the House of Commons :

In the cases both of Penryn and East Retford, I was satisfied with much less evidence than others that the writ ought not to issue. I have always contended that the franchise was given for a public purpose, and that the House had a right to dispose of it, when that would benefit the public. In the Penryn case I was willing to transfer that franchise to Manchester. I have reserved to myself full liberty to give the franchise to great towns, on any fitting occasion.

Such being Sir Robert Peel's principles, and his latest public utterance, it was in vain that Mr. Croker, at Drayton, in January 1831, laboured to commit him to an extreme opposite course. 'I wanted Peel,' he writes, 'to pledge himself, like the Duke, against all Parliamentary Reform. But he will pledge to nothing.'

Thus, had the Whigs brought in, as Lord Grey at first intended, a moderate Reform Bill, they having come into office authorised to attempt some reform, Peel was willing to support them. But their Bill being, in his judgment, revolutionary, he resolved to oppose it. For two nights, however, he sat silent, and Ministers grew keen to hear him.

From Mr. Arbuthnot.

March 3, 1831.

It is right you should know that the Government have determined to say nothing more of their plan until they have heard you.

I met William Ponsonby just now, and he told me this, adding that they expected to carry their measure, but that what he has seen in the House makes him doubt it. He told me that if the measure were not carried they were to go out. He owned to me that the measure alarmed him very much, but of course he will vote for it. Lord Althorp, he told me, had, since Lord John's speech, called upon a near relative of his own, whom he had not seen for a long time, and had said to him that he could now breathe again, that he had had a weight upon his mind not to be imagined, but that the introduction of their Reform Bill had now relieved him.

I could not help telling him that the weight had been transferred to my mind, and that I was influenced by no party feeling in declaring that the measure seemed to me nothing but wickedness and atrocity. He asked me what was to happen if the measure were lost, for the mere broaching of it would render it impossible for any other set of men to govern the country.

I trust that some one will make a speech which a Cabinet Minister will be forced to answer, for the intention certainly is to hear you before another word is said by any member of the Government.

The third night's debate gave Peel an opportunity which he seized. Palmerston was rash enough to allege that his old leader, Canning, would have voted for the Bill. Peel replied that on the contrary Canning, in the last year of his life, as Prime Minister, had voted in a small minority rather than see the franchise forfeited by Penryn bestowed on Manchester. Would to God, Canning were there to confound the sophistry of reformers! Then, reminding the Government that last year they had themselves opposed Lord Blandford's Radical Bill,

he argued, 'You did not imply that you were opposed to all Reform. You merely implied that you objected to that Bill. It is the same with me in this case.' Lord John Russell, he said, in 1819 had objected to disfranchising boroughs not convicted of corruption, 'lest that should lead to a reform on principle, or the reconstruction of the entire House of Commons.' Yet such was the nature of his present measure. Alterations in the representative system might have been put forward, to which he would have assented, but this Bill he must oppose.

It was founded upon an erroneous principle. Especially he noted as its great defect, and a fatal objection, that it confined the franchise to the higher and middle classes. It cut off all connection between day labourers and direct representation.

He was against depriving working men of their share in the franchise. 'If you were establishing a perfectly new system of representation, would it be wise to exclude altogether the sympathies of this class? How much more unwise, when you find it possessed from time immemorial of the privilege, to take the privilege away, and to subject a great, powerful, jealous and intelligent mass of your population to the injury, ay, and to the stigma, of entire uncompensated exclusion?'

After a defence of the small boroughs, as having furnished to a long list of eminent statesmen a first entrance into public life, or a refuge from popular caprice, Sir Robert Peel wound up by pointing to the Revolution of the previous year in France, as a warning that should have taught the Government to abstain from stirring up throughout the land that conflict which must arise between the possessors of existing privileges and those to whom they were to be transferred.

In the opinion of the great general, his chief ally, this first attack had been effectively delivered.

From the Duke of Wellington.

(Private and confidential.)

London: March 6, 1831.

I congratulate you upon the progress of the debate, and upon your own admirable speech. It is impossible that it should not produce an extensive and lasting effect upon the public mind.

In Court circles, meanwhile, the Bill was much discussed. The King, who had been led to regard it as 'aristocratical,' was resolved to give his Whig Ministers fair play. Should they fail, he knew to whom to turn.

From Mr. Arbuthnot.

(Confidential.)

Carlton Gardens: March 9, 1831.

Not feeling well, I went yesterday evening to Sir H. Halford. He said that he had that day seen the King, who talked to him about the Bill.

Sir Henry spoke, he told me, as much against it as he could venture to do, and assured his Majesty his belief was that the Radical, Colonel Jones, would be elected for Leicestershire, as Brougham had been for Yorkshire, if the Bill passed, and if there were a dissolution.

'Oh, but,' replied the King, 'there could not be a dissolution for two years and a half, as it would take that time to go about the country, and to make the new divisions according to the principle of the Bill.' Then the King called it 'an aristocratical measure.'

Sir Henry observed that he did not know whether it would prove so many years hence, but that the immediate consequence of it would be Radicalism.

The King had been told by his Ministers that the Bill would pass, but he said, 'They now tell me they have doubts of the Duke of Bedford.'

Sir Henry wanted to find out whether the King had written in favour of the Bill, and he therefore asked him whether he could use his hand enough to write. The King said, 'No, I can't write, and I believe it is very well that I can't.'

Not at this conversation, but upon several occasions the King has said to Sir Henry, 'I shall give these men fair play. If they can succeed, well and good; but if they cannot, I know my resource.'

Sir Henry told me that he understood that Lord Grey insisted with the King to have no private communication with the Duke of Cumberland. He also told me that the

Duke of Gloucester was very much against the Bill, and that he asked for a private interview with the King, and that he was to have it yesterday.

The Duchess of Gloucester had asked Sir Henry whether he believed it was true, as generally reported, that Taylor had done all the mischief. The Duchess added, 'You know Taylor is very fond of a flourish with his pen.'

Sir Henry was in great dread lest what he had heard at Court should be repeated, and therefore pray don't mention what I have written. I name it to none but to you and the Duke.

I have omitted to tell you that the King talked to Sir Henry of modifying the plan, and even said something of giving compensation to owners of boroughs to be destroyed, which he said had been Mr. Pitt's plan, and which in the present instance would require about three millions and a half. By his naming this sum, one may imagine that something of the kind has been thrown out to him by Lord Grey.

As the second reading of the Bill drew near, some Tories wished to meet it by an amendment approving moderate Reform, but the proposal found no favour with their leaders.

From the Marquis of Chandos.

(Private and confidential.)

March 13, 1831.

I think it right to transmit to you one of the many communications I receive, relative to the necessity of meeting the Ministerial plan of reform by some mode which, while it satisfies the moderate reformer, and protects the timid politician, will ensure the safety of the country, and preserve its tranquillity. The enclosed plan is that I alluded to yesterday.

To the Marquis of Chandos.

March 14, 1831.

Subsequent reflection has not induced me to change the opinion which I expressed to you the other day ; that there

would be great difficulty either in moving as an amendment to the second reading of the Reform Bill a general and indefinite resolution in favour of more limited reform, or in submitting a detailed scheme of reform as a *contre-projet* to that of the Government.

Any plan of reform would, in my opinion, require more serious consideration than could be given to it in the interval that will elapse before the second reading of the Bill; and I much fear that if such a plan were matured, and embraced in a satisfactory manner the various interests in England, Ireland, and Scotland respectively, the present moment of fever and agitation would be an unfortunate period for the production of it. The inclination of my own mind is to adhere to the usage of Parliament, and give a simple negative to a Bill of which I totally disapprove.

The English Bill was read a second time by a majority of one (302 to 301), and Mr. Stanley proceeded to bring in the Bill for Ireland. In the debate on it Sir Robert Peel again condemned the dead level of the ten-pound franchise and predicted that the exclusion of the working classes would not be maintained.

Above all, by this Bill the right of returning members for towns and cities is hereafter to be entrusted to one predominant class of the people, subject to the same influences, whether for good or evil, swayed by the same sympathies, agitated by the same passions, combined by the same interests.

And yet you tell us the chief merit of the scheme is that it is a final settlement. A final settlement! it cannot be final.

If the principle upon which it rests be good, if the arguments are conclusive, they are conclusive against its being a settlement of the question.

Then once more he thus defined his own attitude :

As the new Ministry was formed on the principle of some Reform, I was prepared to make a compromise on the

subject, and to support a measure of moderate Reform, if such had been introduced. After the course taken by Ministers, the position of every man is changed.

Steady opposition at last began to tell in the House of Commons, and one member at least felt as sure as he always did of everything that the country cared little for the question, and that stout resistance to Reform would earn immortal fame.

From Mr. Croker.

West Molesey: April 10, 1831.

You see, the tide is turning. Depend upon it, Reform had no real hold of the public mind, nor has, except what it has gotten by being proposed by the King and the King's Ministers. 'Tis a bugbear. But it frightens us to death, and is just as bad as if it were the evil spirit in reality.

If you are really convinced of the danger of Reform, and choose to take the trouble of opposing it boldly and inveterately, you will defeat it.

Est animus tibi, &c. Read the whole ode, and ponder well the last four strophes.

Two parties are now generated, which never will die. You never could be more than the tail of the one. You are, I hope, destined to be the victorious and, as to fame, immortal head of the other, and I your humble 'vates.'

On April 15 Sir Robert Peel writes to Mr. Croker:

Our object must be an early majority if possible. I prevailed on his Majesty's Ministers last night to promise positively to treat us to a division on this simple question. While the number of Irish and of Scotch members is increased, shall the number of English members be reduced to the extent of thirty or forty? I think we shall beat them on that question.

On April 19 Mr. Croker writes to Lord Hertford:

Depend upon it the real cause of the success of this fearful measure is that our leader neither has nor chooses

to have the command of his army. I hear the Ultra-Tories had a meeting on Sunday, in which the majority objected to enlisting under our leader, who seems as little desirous of having them as his followers.

On the same day Sir Robert Peel spoke out in favour of moderate Reform.

There would be nothing more gratifying to me than to be able to support the Ministry in some moderate change of the existing system. What did Lord Grey say at the close of last year? Why, that the measure of Reform which he desired was moderate—much more moderate than the present measure can possibly pretend to be. The Lord Chancellor too held the same language.

In the division following this speech, Ministers, as Peel had foreseen, were defeated on the question of diminishing the number of members for England and Wales. A few days later Parliament was dissolved.

From Mr. Arbuthnot.

(*Private.*)

Carlton Gardens : April 20, 1831.

My son has just come to tell me that the Cabinet sat for some time to-day; that Lord Grey then went to the King, who positively refused to dissolve; that there was then a second Cabinet, from which Lord Grey went again to the King, and received again a second refusal; and that this was succeeded by a third Cabinet.

In the excitement that ensued on dissolution, at a public meeting, expressions were used about Sir Robert Peel of which he thought it necessary to take notice. Through the services of a friend he obtained sufficient explanation.

To Mr. John Cam Hobhouse.

Drayton Manor : April 29, 1831.

Having left London on Wednesday morning on account of the election for Tamworth, I did not see, previously to my departure from town, the report of a speech said to have

been delivered by you at a public meeting in the city of Westminster (I believe) on the preceding day.

The paper in which I have seen this report is the 'Morning Chronicle.' At the same time that I fully admit your right to comment with great freedom on the conduct of public men, I cannot but feel that there are contained in the report to which I refer some expressions that are not warranted by any latitude of free discussion, and are of a character so personally offensive as to entitle me immediately on my return to town to appeal to you for information whether the report is in respect to those expressions an accurate one.

From Mr. Hobhouse.

May 4, 1831.

I beg to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of this day's date, including a letter which you did me the honour to write to me from Drayton Manor. The latter had not previously reached me.

I informed Sir Henry Hardinge, who delivered these letters to me, that Lord Dacre would have the goodness to call on him forthwith on the subject of these communications.

Memorandum by Lord Dacre.

Lord Dacre delivers the following paper to Sir Henry Hardinge on the part of Mr. Hobhouse, which was accepted by Sir Henry Hardinge on the part of Sir Robert Peel :

'Mr. Hobhouse had not an opportunity of looking into the "Morning Chronicle" before he left town for Cambridge. In as far as he can recall the exact expressions used by him on the 26th ultimo, he thinks the report of his speech contained in the "Times" newspaper quite correct. Mr. Hobhouse feels convinced that he did not attribute to Sir Robert Peel the application of any supposed subscription to the purposes of deceiving or defrauding the people, but he did state that such application would be an attempt against the liberties of the people.'

‘In the other expressions which are objected to, Mr. Hobhouse did unquestionably describe a body of persons carried away by ungoverned passions. But he regrets that Sir Robert Peel should have construed such expressions into a personal insult to himself, which it was not Mr. Hobhouse’s intention to convey.’

From Sir Henry Hardinge.

May 4, 1831.

Lord Fitzroy Somerset agrees that the non-publication is the most generous and politic course, and that, having amply vindicated your sense of what was due to your own honour, by the line you have adopted and the very satisfactory reparation contained in Lord Dacre’s paper, you ought not under the existing circumstances of excitement to do more.

Sir Henry Hardinge to the Duke of Wellington.

11 Whitehall Place : May 5, 1831.

I returned hastily from Cornwall to meet Sir Robert Peel, who had consulted me as to the notice he ought to take of certain passages in a speech of Mr. Hobhouse.

I called upon Hobhouse yesterday morning, who referred me to Lord Dacre, and after a long discussion the obnoxious words were some disavowed, and others excused, by expressions of Hobhouse’s regret that, contrary to his intention, Peel should have so construed them. This paper signed by Lord Dacre and accepted by me has put an end to this unpleasant business.

The general election was held under the old arrangements. Great towns, Manchester and Birmingham, Leeds and Sheffield, were still unrepresented; nomination and corruption still prevailed. But even so the verdict of the constituencies did not confirm Mr. Croker’s estimate, that ‘Reform had no hold upon the public mind.’ Of the members who had voted against the Bill more than one hundred lost their seats.

When the new Parliament met in June, some Conservatives, by this time known as 'The Waverers,' again wished to bring in a moderate Reform Bill. But to such a course their leaders still were disinclined.

From the Duke of Wellington.

May 21, 1831.

Lord Wharncliffe called upon me after I saw you in London. He expressed great anxiety that we should meet the opponents of the Bill, and concert with them a course of proceeding. He told me that he understood that Charles Wynne had stated to his constituents that he should prepare a measure of Reform, which he should propose to substitute for that of the Ministers. Lord Wharncliffe approved of this course, and said that he should be disposed to support it. He appeared to think that it would now be impossible to do less than deprive every borough in Schedule A of the privilege of sending more than one member to the House of Commons.

I told him that you were gone out of town and were not likely to return till the meeting of Parliament; that I could not undertake to introduce any measure of Reform into Parliament; and that I had every reason to believe that you felt the same disinclination to incur such responsibility. I added that my opinion upon Reform in general was not at all altered, but that it was not at all inconsistent with that opinion to prefer one reform to another, if it were found that Parliament determined that they would have Reform in some shape.

This is the substance of what passed. But he earnestly urged that we should meet the Anti-Reformers before the meeting of Parliament.

He attended the meetings at Lord Mansfield's after I had seen him. I understand that nothing passed there excepting an expression of a desire that all past offences should be forgotten, and that we should all cordially unite for our common safety.

To the Duke of Wellington.

Drayton Manor : May 24, 1831.

I am much disinclined to be a party to any distinct proposition of Reform.

To take one member from every borough in Schedule A would admit the right to take two, and would recognise the whole principle of the Bill.

I think there is a clear distinction between mitigating the evil of the Bill in Committee and originating a scheme of Reform.

I do not consider that persons out of office, because they oppose a Bill to which they decidedly object, are under any obligation to propose a substitute.

I must say also that I am not prepared to propose any measure of Reform to which I see the slightest chance of a majority of the present House of Commons assenting.

Sir Robert Peel was determined, however, not to follow the reckless example of the Ultra-Tories, who, being themselves too weak to hold office, had taken revenge upon the Duke and himself by combining with the Radicals to throw them out, and so had brought in the Whigs and their Reform Bill. He would have no hand in turning out a Government unless he saw his way to replace it by a better. Being bound to resist a revolutionary Bill, he would vote against it even with Ultra-Tories, but from any further union with them he had made up his mind to stand aloof.

To Mr. Croker.

Drayton Manor : May 28, 1831.

There are two parties amongst those who call themselves Conservatives—one which views the state of the country with great alarm ; which sees a relaxation of all authority, an impatience of all that restraint which is indispensable to the existence not of this or that, but of all Government ; which is ready to support monarchy, property, and public faith, whenever attacked.

There is another party, and that by far the more

numerous, which has the most presumptuous confidence in its own fitness for administering public affairs—a confidence hardly justified by any public proof of capacity for the task; which would unite with O'Connell in resisting the Irish Coercion Law; which sees great advantage in a deficit of many millions, and thinks the imposition of a property tax on Ireland and the aristocracy a Conservative measure; decries the intemperance of the police; thinks it treachery to attack a Radical, or rather to defend yourself against a Radical, provided that Radical hates the Government; and which, never having yet dreamt of the question how they could restore order, prefers chaos to the maintenance of the present Government.

Now to this latter section I do not, and will not, belong. I will not play that game which, played by the Ultra-Tories against us, is the main cause of the present evils.

A Radical and a Republican avowed are dangerous characters; but there is nothing half so dangerous as the man who pretends to be a Conservative, but is ready to be anything, provided only he can create confusion.

Is it not strange that men will not see so far (no very great distance) as the answer to these two questions: How are thirty offices vacated to be filled with efficient holders, and the return of those holders secured? If this cannot be done, what will happen?

A few letters exchanged with private friends show how Sir Robert Peel's thoughts were engaged during the summer and autumn.

To Mr. Goulburn.

Drayton Manor: June 5, 1831.

I think no better of the Bill, and I think worse of the Government, than I did when I left town. I am perfectly ready, as I was last Session, to co-operate with any persons of any party in resistance to the Bill. Resistance in the House of Commons may be fruitless, but that is no reason why the principle of the Bill should not be vigorously and decidedly opposed.

When we are beaten on the principle, we may try with perfect consistency to mitigate as far as we can the evil of the details. But my intention is to be no party to any measure of Reform of Parliament brought forward distinctly as a substitute for the Bill. It is not likely that the present House of Commons, or the country in its present state, would be content with any Bill that abjured the principles on which the Government Bill is founded, and I see great embarrassment in the admission of these principles, however limited the application.

I agree with you as to cordial union, so far as the Bill is concerned. But I shall consider very maturely indeed before I form a party connection with the Ultra-Tory party.

I will go as far as any one in adhering to existing party connections. The formation of new ones is entirely an open question, and many powerful reasons operate with me to make me exceedingly cautious on that head.

The Bill this time, after the appeal to the country, passed its second reading in the Commons by a majority of 136, and its opponents then had a brief respite.

To Mr. Goulburn.

Whitehall: Aug. 26, 1831.

I hope that you will be able to come to me at Drayton Manor. Hardinge and Murray, and I believe Sir George Clerk, will meet you, perhaps the Duke of Wellington and Aberdeen. I have named the third of September as the day most likely to be convenient with reference to the progress of the Reform Bill.

Nothing now remains but the machinery of the Bill. I see no reason why we should labour to perfect the machinery by which a principle of which we disapprove is to be effected. But we should labour in vain, for the majority is now become unassailable by reason.

On October 8, however, the Lords, by a majority of 199 to 158, threw out the Bill. On October 10 the Commons passed a resolution lamenting its fate, and expressing unabated confidence in

the Government. Sir Robert Peel argued in vain against committing the House to the principles of the Bill, and to its leading provisions. The resolution was carried by a majority of 329 to 198.

Some of the results of the rejection of the second Bill are thus described by the historian (Walpole, iii. 226).

‘The news of the defeat of the Reform Bill was everywhere followed by riot. Nottingham Castle was burned down, because it was the property of Newcastle. The house of a Tory squire in the neighbourhood was set on fire by the mob, and his unfortunate wife died from the effects of her exposure to the cold.’

In Bristol the Bishop’s Palace and the Mansion House were burned. ‘A large portion of the city was in flames, and the lowest of the population were extending the conflagration, and pillaging the houses.’

‘Riot at Bristol was succeeded by disturbances at other places . . . and the seething populace, daily acquiring evidence of its own power, appeared ready to burst the bonds of discipline, and to spread ruin over the land.’

From Drayton, Nottingham was distant about thirty miles, Derby (where a mob had released prisoners from the gaol) about twenty miles, and Birmingham (where an immense meeting had passed a resolution to pay no taxes) about ten miles. Naturally, therefore, Sir Robert Peel felt some anxiety for his family, and prepared for self-defence. In Ireland he had learned the need, at times, and the efficacy, of meeting armed attack by armed resistance. He had also reflected on the situation, and was confirmed in his resolve on no account, while feeling ran so high, to start a rival Reform Bill.

To Mr. Arbuthnot.

Drayton Manor : Oct. 13, 1831.

I left town yesterday morning, not being quite easy at having my children alone in this house, with Birmingham political unions on one side, and Derby and Nottingham on the other.

We are too apt to think that any great political event, or great popular excitement, is referable to some one cause. Whether the Duke had made his speech in November

1830 or not, we should never have been able to stem the tide that was setting in in favour of Radical Reform.

That tide has now been swollen to a height by the King, the Government, and the Press, which will make it pretty nearly as unmanageable by them as, even without such superfluous excitement, it would have been by us.

If there are any persons dreaming that either an Anti-Reform or a moderate-Reform Government could at this time stand one hour in the present House of Commons, the division on Monday last, but far more the feeling manifested in the debate, must, I should think, dissipate the delusion.

The greatest misfortune, accompanied with the greatest disgrace, that could befall any of us Anti-Reformers would be the attempt under present circumstances to originate Reform in any shape. I never will.

Dissolution would make bad worse. Hostility to the bishops and the House of Lords would be as good a rallying cry now as Reform was in June last.

My firm opinion is that dissolution in the present state of the three kingdoms would be a rapid step in advance towards utter ruin.

To Mr. Croker.

Drayton Manor : Nov. 10, 1831.

It seems to me that counter-associations for the purpose of defence must be formed, if Sir Francis Burdett and other supporters of the Government are allowed to organise armed clubs for the purpose of attack.

That the purpose is attack—attack upon life and property—cannot be doubted, and the only safety is in preparation for defence. What I chiefly desire is timely notice.

From Mr. Croker.

Kensington : Nov. 11, 1831.

Counter-associations would only be the more certain and earlier destruction. In the first place, it would sanction a principle of associations independent of the Crown, which would legitimise the Radical National Guard, and end us

at once. Secondly, when it becomes a matter of association and counter-association, it is a mere affair of numbers, and eventually of physical force. I need not say that in the present state of excitement and insanity we should be overpowered in both.

To Mr. Croker.

Drayton Manor : Nov. 14, 1831.

Associations formed with any ostentation or parade, that should profess to be independent of royal control, and that should offer the least provocation, would be manifestly unwise.

But I certainly, if the necessity arises, shall form, and shall counsel others to form, quiet unostentatious associations for the sole purpose of defence against unprovoked aggression.

Association may be too grand a phrase. What I mean is, a select cohort of persons on whom I can thoroughly depend, who may constitute an armed garrison for my protection and that of my family in case of actual attack, such attacks as have been made, and are threatened. I am sure nothing could be more mischievous than to abandon property without defence, and it is well to be prepared before the hour of danger actually arrives. I am sure also that nothing could equal the effect of even a single instance of desperate and successful resistance against the armed vagabonds of a town.

From Mr. Holmes.

Nov. 21, 1831.

I shall inquire in the course of to-morrow about your twelve carbines and accoutrements, and let you know their prices.

I saw Lord Wharncliffe yesterday. Those people I fear humbug him, for I understand from him that his conversations at Downing Street have rather been on generalities than on any distinct proposition coming from them, which ought to be the case.

Lord Grey and Lord Brougham, I hear, are much alarmed at the extent of the political unions, and I now believe that Parliament will be called together at the earliest possible period, and an attempt will be made to put them down.

From Mr. Croker.

Nov. 18, 1831.

The old phrase of 'a screw loose' is now in every mouth as to the position of the Government. Most people think that the rub is between the King and the Ministers. I rather suspect that it is amongst the latter, for I do not think they are yet sufficiently agreed on ulterior measures to have been able to lay before the King anything that he could object to. For instance, the Clubs say that he objects to make peers. But surely matters cannot be ripe for bringing that question to issue yet.

As I write from the Athenæum, I hear Dr. Holland, at my elbow, asking with reference to the magistrates of Sunderland, who, he says, are well disposed but quite powerless, 'Where is there any authority nowadays? Can any magistrate venture to do any act, however loyal or wholesome, which the populace disapproves?'

This is, I believe, the sentiment of all the people of the upper ranks here.

In the clubs, in stage coaches, and in all such accidental meetings, I am told, and my own experience corroborates the statement, that it is rare to meet a Reformer.

To Mr. Croker.

Drayton Manor: Nov. 19, 1831.

Dawson and Herries are here, and we thank you for your news. As the King repeatedly said to me—perhaps being the only poetry he ever made—

I consider dissolution
Tantamount to revolution,

I have no belief that when the hour of trial comes he will resist the making of peers.

An attempt of some Tory peers to come to terms with the Government received no countenance from their leaders.

From Lord Wharncliffe.

Nov. 21, 1831.

I think Lord Talbot had some conversation with you a fortnight ago relative to the Reform question, in consequence of what passed between him and me while I was in Staffordshire. An advance had, at that time, been made to Lord Harrowby and myself by some of the Government, to ascertain how far we might be disposed to come to some understanding with them, with a view, by mutual concession and arrangement, to something of a more satisfactory nature in the way of a settlement of that question.

I have in consequence seen some of the members of the Government, and find that there is a real desire upon their part to conciliate, if possible, us, who have opposed their late Bill, and to rid themselves of their present violent and dangerous allies, or rather masters, for so they really are. Of course an arrangement of this sort can only be brought about by mutual concession, but neither party must be asked to concede farther than is consistent with their honour and characters as public men.

There can be no doubt that the present state of the kingdom with regard to this question is highly dangerous, and must become worse daily, unless it is put into train for adjustment. I frankly own, therefore, that I am prepared to make some considerable concessions, and I have reason to believe that the Government on their part will do likewise.

By these means it is to be hoped that something may be saved from the wreck, and that we may be placed in a somewhat less dangerous situation as to the future. In my notions upon this Harrowby entirely concurs, and so indeed do all those who have acted with us, whom I have been able to see here. I have written to the Duke of Wellington, but have not yet got his answer.

You would much oblige me by letting me hear from you, in answer to this.

To Lord Wharncliffe.

Nov. 23, 1831.

I shall feel it necessary to keep myself wholly unfettered in respect to the Reform Bill, until my arrival in London, and until I have had the opportunity of conferring with those with whom I acted in the House of Commons in opposition to the late Bill.

I cannot foresee the probability that it will be in my power to communicate, directly or indirectly, with his Majesty's Government, or to authorise any communication to them, as to the part which I shall take in Parliament in reference to their new measure.

I rejoice to hear that you have discovered a disposition on the part of some members of the Government to sever their present connection with the Radicals, but I must say that every public declaration made by Ministers, which I have seen, would not warrant that inference.

Those declarations seem to preclude any effectual concessions on their part, and would be in themselves, while they remained unretracted and unexplained, an insuperable bar to any understanding, express or implied, between the Government and myself.

From Mr. Herries.

Nov. 24, 1831.

Nothing could, in my opinion, be more judicious than the answer which you have given to Lord Wharncliffe.

It is quite in accordance with the sentiments of the few persons with whom I have spoken confidentially on the subject. I have felt so strongly the unfitness of entering into any understanding, or even being fettered by any expressions of opinion on the overtures made by Lord Wharncliffe, that I have evaded the intimation I received of his desire to see me.

He has, however, spoken quite freely to Holmes and to Lord Chandos together, and they have reported his conversation to me. If the Government really make the concessions, or half the concessions, which they have suggested to him, in their new Bill, we may retort on Lord John Russell his quotation, 'The Lord hath delivered them into our hands.'

In the meantime their proclamation against political unions is an excellent measure. It is a declaration of war against their own most effective supporters, and cuts off from them the instruments with which they were working destruction to the country and to themselves. I must conclude from all that I have heard that they are fully resolved to wage war in earnest against the Unions.

How *they* can put down these popular associations, I do not well understand. But that is their affair. It will be our business to give all the aid we can in so good a work, and one so necessary for the salvation of the country.

From Mr. Holmes.

Nov. 25, 1831.

I am delighted with your answer to Lord Wharncliffe. I fear these people are humbugging him. He has not yet received from them one tangible proposition.

I this day got you fourteen carbines, bayonets, and accoutrements. They are of the new pattern and best Tower manufacture. How will you have them sent to you? I have only desired a cask of ball cartridges to be put in the case.

To Mr. Goulburn.

Drayton Manor : Nov. 30, 1831.

I shall be in town on Saturday night for the express purpose of affording the opportunities of consideration and concert which you suggest.

Some days since Lord Wharncliffe wrote me a very vague and unsatisfactory note, stating that he had discovered intentions on the part of some members of the

Government to break with the Radicals and greatly to modify the Bill.

He said he was prepared to make large concessions in return for this condescension, and begged I would immediately write to him in answer to his note. What sort of answer he could expect to such an indefinite communication, I know not. I enclose, however, a copy of the answer which I did send.

On December 17 the third Reform Bill passed its second reading in the Commons by 324 to 162, being in the proportion of two to one.

Tory private members were still drafting moderate Bills, and Tory leaders still viewed them with disapproval. Sir Robert Peel's policy was, if possible, so to 'mitigate' the Government Bill as to enable the Lords to give it a second reading, after which the Lords might further amend the Bill, with some hope that some of their amendments might be accepted. Failing this, he was prepared to advise a second rejection by the Upper Chamber.

To Mr. Goulburn.

December 1831?

Mr. Hildyard's Bill assumes that there must be a very extensive reform. Now, proceeding on that assumption, are we more likely to get a good and comparatively speaking a moderate measure of reform by mitigating and amending the present Bill, or by rejecting the present Bill and substituting a totally new one?

I see no course between the two. We were beat in the House of Commons on the second reading of the present Bill by a fearful majority, of two to one. Will not that majority be more inclined to receive with favour amendments to their own Bill than quietly to submit to the substitution of another for it? I think they will.

I apprehend that there will be among many of our friends in the Lords and Commons a very earnest wish that we should attempt *bona fide* so to modify and temper the present Bill that the Lords may be able consistently with honour and principle to give it a second reading, and

thus may be enabled to apply if possible further modifications and mitigations. Depend upon it this feeling will be very strong. It will be shared by the Harrowbys, Wharncliffes, Chandoses, Stuart Wortleys, Barings, Clives. Lord Talbot and Robert Curzon have written to me in the same sense. Add to these all the bishops.

We, the opposers of the principle of the Bill, have done our part. We have vindicated our own consistency, and maintained to the uttermost the vote of the House of Lords for the rejection of the Bill.

We are at perfect liberty to co-operate with the parties above mentioned in eliminating as much evil as we can from the present Bill.

My impression, then, is that, acting on the assumption that some such measure as the one you enclose must pass, still there is more chance of hewing it out of the present misshapen mass than of moulding it afresh from new materials. The chance, I fear, is but small in either case, but less in my opinion in the latter than in the first.

I stumble at the threshold of the Bill you have sent me. Why begin by extinguishing by express enactment every existing right of voting, and make the forty-shilling freehold right date not from the reign of Henry the Sixth but from yesterday? Engraft new rights on the old stock if you will, but why begin by rooting up the old stock, and planting a set of seedlings all of just the same age, copyhold, leasehold, and forty-shilling freehold? Keep the hoar of ages for what is really venerable from its antiquity, and let the new rights be brand new.

To Mr. Goulburn.

[Dated ' 1831. ']

You omit altogether one consideration in your last letter respecting Reform, namely the creation of such a number of peers as shall ensure the passing of the Government Bill.

Suppose that to be—as I fear it is—a probable contingency, what will be gained by the introduction of a Bill

conceding many of the principles of that to which we object? I think few votes would be gained, and some strongholds of opposition abandoned.

However, Lord Harrowby must decide for himself. I could not advise him to bring in Mr. Hildyard's Bill, because I see a great distinction between originating a substantive measure of Reform, even as a reluctant substitute for a worse measure, and the attempt to mitigate in a Committee the evil of the worse.

The author of the substitute does assume, if not the whole, at least a very serious share of responsibility of his own act. The mitigator in committee is absolutely free from any responsibility.

If the question lay between passing the present Bill and its rejection, I for one am prepared for all the consequences of rejection, and I really do not believe that those consequences would be formidable.

1832.

After Christmas, when Sir Robert Peel returned to town, Lord Harrowby laid before him a letter, advising as the best course that the Lords should read the Bill a second time, and amend it. Sir Robert Peel's answer has been published in Lord Mahon's 'Miscellanies,' but must be given here as the best record of his reasons for acting with the Duke of Wellington in an attempt, which failed, to reject the third Reform Bill on principle in the House of Lords, in face of a threat that it should be forced on them by a large creation of peers.

From Lord Harrowby.

Feb. 4, 1832.

I am induced by our conversation of yesterday to take the liberty of sending you, for your perusal, a copy of a letter which I wrote some days ago to a noble friend.

No line of conduct can, as we now stand, be free from great difficulties and objections, but in this alone I see a chance of comparative safety.

In the moment of success last Session, I thought, and said to some of those who congratulated me, 'We have acted right now. This will do for once, but will not bear repetition.'

If the Bill be not read a second time, and amended, where are we? By what other means can we ward off destruction, even for a time?

To Lord Harrowby.

Whitehall: Feb. 5, 1832.

No one can feel more strongly than I do the absurdity of the doctrine that, because a certain course was taken one Session, it must necessarily be taken the next, with reference to the same measure. You might as well say that you shall always navigate the same water with the helm set the same way, without regard to the state of the tide or the shifting of the wind.

The question you discuss is one of extreme difficulty. Questions of a similar nature must frequently occur in politics, but rarely under circumstances so peculiar—rarely when so many considerations have to be weighed, and when the hazard of a false step, I fear indeed of any step, is so great.

I assume with you that the Ministers have the power of carrying the Bill, or, to speak more correctly, have the power of making any number of peers which they may deem sufficient to carry the Bill. Shall the necessity of a fresh creation for such an object be averted by acquiescence on the part of the present House of Lords in the second reading of the Bill?

If the Bill were the whole question, and if—the Bill being passed—I could blot out the memory of all that had preceded and all that had accompanied its passing, I should perhaps answer the question in the affirmative. The whole question being *res integra*, and the passing of the Bill being assumed to be inevitable, I would rather see a graceful concession to necessity by the present House

of Peers than that recourse should be had to a proceeding unconstitutional in its origin, and in its consequences full of permanent irremediable evil.

But can the House of Peers now make a graceful concession? Public impression, the impression of the vulgar—that is, of the vast mass of mankind, of the highest as well as the lowest station—cannot be disregarded in politics. And will not that public, and that vulgar, argue, ‘The House of Lords has yielded, not from conviction, not from some overpowering necessity, but, so far as we can judge, from the menace of a fresh creation?’

I assure you that my great object in public life for the last six months, has been to vindicate the authority and maintain the character of the House of Lords. I think that is the institution most exposed to danger from the short-sighted folly of the times, and also the institution which, if it remain erect in character, is most likely to serve as a rallying point for the returning good sense and moderation of the country.

Now I doubt whether the House of Lords will not lose more of character and authority by yielding against its conviction on the second reading of the Bill of Reform, than by compelling the Government to resort to a *coup d'état*, and to carry the Bill by a fresh creation.

I admit it is a very disputable question, and very powerful arguments may be adduced in support of the opposite conclusion. The certainty of carrying the whole Bill, principle and details; the infusion of a popular and democratic spirit into the House of Lords; the cheapening of hereditary honours; the preponderance of a party, and that the worst party—half Whig and half Radical—are all evils the magnitude of which it would be vain to deny.

But on the other hand I do not see much prospect of a successful struggle on details, the principle of the Bill having been admitted on the second reading. The first great outwork will have been carried. All the hopes and expectations of final success on the part of the assailants

and of reformers throughout the country will have been naturally and justifiably raised. The very constitution of the resisting force fits it much more for a pitched battle than for the desultory warfare of Committee. The absent but powerful allies, the proxies, are then lost, and I own I despair of your being able to extort any effectual concessions in Committee. I think the Bill will pass—the second reading having being carried—without important modifications. The gain will be that no new peers are created, or rather that no valid pretence for creating new peers is given. That is all; for peers may be created for other objects, and probably soon will be.

The loss on the other hand will be this. The Government will have effected its object by the menace of an unconstitutional act. They will have gained the prize without incurring the odium and disgust of the crime. They will have established a precedent for future Governments, more tempting, more easily followed, and therefore more dangerous than would be the actual commission of a revolting act.

Why have we been struggling against the Reform Bill in the House of Commons? Not in the hope of resisting its final success in that House, but because we look beyond the Bill, because we know the nature of popular concessions, their tendency to propagate the necessity for further and more extensive compliances. We want to make the 'descensus' as 'difficilis' as we can—to teach young inexperienced men charged with the trust of government that, though they may be backed by popular clamour, they shall not override on the first springtide of excitement every barrier and breakwater raised against popular impulses; that the carrying of extensive changes in the Constitution without previous deliberation shall not be a holiday task; that there shall be just what has happened—the House sick of the question, the Ministers repenting they brought it forward, the country paying the penalty for the folly and incapacity of its rulers. All these are salutary sufferings, that may I trust make people hereafter

distinguish between the amendment and the overturning of their institutions.

Suppose that we had given way, that we had acquiesced in the Bill, and given no trouble to the Ministers. My firm belief is that the country, so far from being satisfied with our concessions, would have lost all reverence and care for remaining institutions, and would have had their appetite whetted for a further feast at the expense of the Church, or the monarchy.

Now this is the principle on which, if I were a peer, I should vote against the second reading of the Reform Bill. I would make the Ministers incur the odium of the act which they menace, and the responsibility which will attach to it at the bar of a future and a better judging public. I would trust that the example set by the House of Lords would tell with effect, not immediately but ultimately, even upon the new peers, the instruments of its present degradation.

Mine is a melancholy view, as it excludes the prospect of success. It excludes, however, participation in the crime, and gives to the present House of Lords the honours of determined though fruitless resistance :

*Ne non procumbat honeste
Respicit, hæc etiam cura cadentis erat.*

I should have written probably with more reserve if I did not consider myself a spectator of the fray, with no interest, personal or political, in its issue ; no interest at least in obstructing a settlement of the Reform question, even if I had the slightest wish—which I have not, but directly the reverse—to resume official labours.

Notwithstanding this advice, the Lords, outvoting the Duke of Wellington, passed by a majority of nine the second reading of the Bill. After this, at Lord Harrowby's request, Mr. Croker wrote to him suggesting amendments, and submitted the letter to Sir Robert Peel, who replied adopting, in default of rejection, the policy of mitigation.

To Mr. Croker.

April 23, 1832.

I approve the general principles of your letter. I see nothing left, now that the House of Lords has approved the principle of the Reform Bill, but a strenuous concerted effort to mitigate the evil of it. Both Lords and Commons have now by their votes so far discredited the system of Government under which we have lived, that it seems to me inevitable to try another.

That other had better, in my opinion, be the result of amendment to the present Bill, than of a new scheme of Reform, proposed by Anti-Reformers.

After Easter, when the Lords reassembled, on the first evening, on a motion by Lord Lyndhurst postponing the clauses for disfranchising small boroughs, the Government were beaten. Upon this they at once demanded of the King the creation of fifty or more peers to force the measure through. The King refused; his Ministers resigned; the King sent for Lord Lyndhurst, and Lord Lyndhurst advised the formation of a Ministry prepared to carry a 'moderate' Reform Bill. But the King, considering his personal honour to be pledged, insisted that the Reform must be 'extensive,' and Lord Lyndhurst undertook negotiations on that basis.

Then followed, under urgent pressure, an extreme divergence of judgment, and a singular exchange of parts, between the Tory leaders.

The Duke of Wellington, who in 1830 had overthrown his own Government by an uncompromising declaration against any Parliamentary Reform, and who in March of this year had avowed that 'his own opinions were exactly what they had been,' yet of two evils was prepared to choose the less. The 'extensive' Bill on which the King insisted, the Duke still thought, 'would prove most injurious to the country.' But what Lord Grey required was worse. It was not, in the words of the King's Speech, by which Lord Grey was bound, 'to adhere to the acknowledged principles of the Constitution, by which the prerogatives of the Crown and the authority of both Houses of Parliament are equally secured.' On the contrary, it was to use the prerogative

of the Crown to put an end to the authority of one House. The King deplored such use of his prerogative. He appealed to his former Ministers for help, 'to save the Sovereign,' the Duke said, 'from the indignity of having so gross a violation of the Constitution imposed upon him.' Such an appeal the Duke could not reject, for very shame. He was prepared himself, if no one else would, to form a Government on the King's terms.

Mr. Croker also, who one year before had in vain urged Sir Robert Peel to pledge himself, with the Duke, against all Reform, now urged him, equally in vain, to bring in, with the Duke, an 'extensive' Bill, assuring him that his reasons against doing so were only colourable, that the proposed abandonment of all his declarations was required of him alike by public interests and by private honour, and that to refuse would expose him to contempt.

Sir Robert Peel, who, unlike the Duke, had been prepared for moderate Reform, would not be driven to take a part in what to him spelt democratic revolution.

From Mr. Croker.

May 4, 1832

I agree that you are the last man who ought to undertake the Government at this moment. But if at last it come to be you or nobody, the very fact decides the question. Every effort should be made to get Lord Harrowby or Lord Anybody to consent to take the helm for the moment. But if there should ultimately be no alternative but Lord Grey or you, can you doubt what the public advantage and your private honour alike require of you?

A man easily finds, or rather fancies, colourable reasons for not doing what he has no mind to.

You have no desire to be Minister. You are disgusted, if not dismayed, at the prospect, and you permit your dislikes and dread to array themselves in the self-deluding garb of consistency and contempt of power. You are now quite sincere. The natural and peculiar delicacy of your mind gives substance and weight to the shadows—for they are no more—which you imagine might cloud your charac-

ter. But be assured you will not long, and the world will not for a moment, be so deceived. And if the King and Constitution sink under your eyes, without your having jumped in to attempt to save them, your prudence and consistency will be called by less flattering titles in that black-edged page of history which will record the extinction of the monarchy of England.

If the Whigs are allowed to get back without a struggle on the part of the Tories, and you personally, *en dernier ressort*, depend upon it, instead of honour and character, we shall have only degradation and contempt.

Pray ponder over all this. It is easy enough to say, 'I will have nothing to do with it!' but you must have something to do with it, for your refusal is a very important and responsible something.

This requires no answer, only your own serious thoughts. I shall see you to-morrow.

Next morning, when Mr. Croker called, Sir Robert Peel had written an answer, which he read to him and Goulburn. As was his wont in crises, especially where honour was concerned, he had taken counsel not of others, but of his own sure instinct and unhesitating judgment. No argument, no example, of colleague or of friend could shake his fixed resolve.

To Mr. Croker.

Whitehall Gardens: May 12, 1832.

If I could be a 'waverer' as to the course which I should pursue in such a crisis as the present, I should, by the very act of wavering, prove that I was unfit for the crisis.

I foresee that a Bill of Reform, including everything that is really important and really dangerous in the present Bill, must pass. For me individually to take the conduct of such a Bill, to assume the responsibility of the consequences which I have predicted as the inevitable result of such a Bill, would be, in my opinion, personal degradation to myself.

After referring to 'one of a hundred declarations to the same effect' made by him in Parliament, he continues :

I look beyond the exigency and the peril of the present moment, and I do believe that one of the greatest calamities that could befall the country would be the utter want of confidence in the declarations of public men which must follow the adoption of the Bill of Reform by me as a Minister of the Crown.

It is *not* a repetition of the Catholic question. I was then in office. I had advised the concession as a Minister. I should now assume office for the purpose of carrying the measure to which up to the last moment I have been inveterately opposed.

A few days later (May 16) the firmness of this decision was tested by a visit from Lord Lyndhurst, who had been in conference with the King, and came to ask whether Sir Robert Peel considered it to be in his power to enter the King's service. What passed was stated in Parliament by Sir Robert, and it may be observed how solicitous he was to guard against implying any censure on the Duke of Wellington for having taken a course directly contrary to his own.

From Sir Robert Peel's Speech.

Lord Lyndhurst stated to me the difficulties in which the King had been placed by the resignation of his late servants, on account of his refusal to create peers for the purpose of carrying the Reform Bill.

I was informed that the only other person who had been consulted was the Duke of Wellington, who was determined to assist his Majesty in any way, who wished no office, but was willing to take office.

I will state that I did understand the question as put to me to be, whether I was willing to accept that office which in political life is supposed to be the highest object of ambition. I ought to state, in justice to the King, that it was at the same time notified to me, the acceptance of office must be on the clear understanding that his Majesty's

past declarations with regard to Reform must be fulfilled, and whoever took office must accept it on the condition of introducing an extensive measure of Reform.

I replied, I admit upon the impulse of the moment, but upon an impulse which my mature judgment only served to confirm, that no authority or example of any man, or any number of men, could shake my resolution, not to accept office, under existing circumstances, upon such conditions.

I firmly believe that those men who were willing at such a crisis to devote themselves to the service of the Crown acted not only from the most disinterested motives, but from motives the highest and purest by which public men could be actuated.

Their reasons for taking that course were that they would have lowered themselves in their own esteem if they had not been ready to make that sacrifice; and it was precisely on the same ground, a sense of personal honour, that I could not take office to carry the Reform Bill.

These opinions separated me from some noble friends of mine, who did not feel themselves placed in the same situation. I regret that separation, even though it be temporary, particularly the separation from that man whom I chiefly honour. And I am anxious to declare that even that separation has only raised him in my esteem.

At a meeting at Apsley House (May 14), after much discussion as to the best way of dealing with the King's appeal to be saved from the necessity of creating peers, it had been ultimately proposed by Peel and carried—

That the Duke should tell the King it was impossible to hope to form a Tory Administration on the basis of passing the Reform Bill, and that therefore his Majesty must take his own course. The Duke was to add that, in order to save his Majesty's personal honour as to the creation of peers, he himself would, so far as depended upon him, remove all pretence for such a creation by withdrawing his opposition. ('Croker Papers,' ii. 167.)

He did so, and within a month the Bill passed the House of Lords, and received the Royal assent.

But to the last, until the national will had rendered further effort useless, Sir Robert Peel had steadily opposed a measure which he foresaw would end in vesting all substantial power in one all-powerful People's Chamber. He preferred the ancient British Constitution. For this he was content to have fought, and failed.

Victrix causa deis placuit, sed victa Catoni.

CHAPTER VIII.

1833.

The First Reformed Parliament—Where should Tories sit?—Policy of their Leaders in making the Reform Bill work—Saving the Whigs from their Friends—Irish Church Bill—Coronation Oath not binding against Legislation—Review of the Session—Changed Position of the House of Lords—Peel on Walpole.

THE Reform Bill had become law. Sir Robert Peel accepted the accomplished fact. He bowed loyally to the nation's will, and for eighteen years achieved his greatest triumphs in Parliaments, to the new constitution of which he had been inexorably opposed.

But the conditions of serving the Crown were changed, and imposed on him—if he meant to act in, and upon, 'the living present'—new rules of political conduct. As there were two Pitts, one before, the other after the French Revolution, so, it has been said,¹ there were two Peels, one before, the other after, Parliamentary Reform.

When the first Reformed Parliament met, the position of the Conservative leader was full of difficulty. It was even proposed that the party, reduced to less than one-fourth of the House, should leave to Radicals the chief Opposition benches, and sit below the gangway.

From Lord Mahon.

Jan. 8, 1833.

You have probably seen by this time several calculations as to the composition of the new House of Commons. Those which have been mentioned to me by the most trustworthy persons divide the Assembly as follows: Conservatives, 150; Whigs or Ministerialists, 320; thick-

¹ Said by Mr. Gladstone to the Editor.

and-thin Radicals, Repealers from Ireland, members or friends of the political Unions, and so forth, not less than 190.

Now supposing this, as I believe, to be a pretty accurate computation, I would beg leave to submit to your consideration whether, under such disastrous circumstances, it would not be advisable that the Conservatives should yield to the Radicals their places in the House opposite to the Treasury Benches, and sit below the gangway on the Opposition side.

When two distinct parties are in opposition to a Government, it has always been considered right and usual that the stronger of the two should have the better and the more ostensible position. We were much stronger than the Radicals in the last Parliament, and on the principle I have just mentioned used bitterly to complain of the intrusion (for so we considered it) of Waithman Wood and other such fellows amongst our ranks. We are now in our turn completely outnumbered. On the same principle, therefore, on which we then maintained our position, ought we not at present to yield it?

I admit, as an objection to the change of seats which I am now suggesting, that it is doubtful whether all these Radicals, determined and pledged to oppose the Government the moment it flags and falls short in its revolutionary career, may yet think proper to take their seats on the Ministerial side. But on the other hand I own that it appears to me of very great importance not to sit pell-mell with the Radicals, and certainly the great body of them will take the Opposition side of the House.

I am sure that you are much too well aware of the importance of little things at a great crisis to discard this consideration as a mere trifling query, whether we ought to sit a few feet nearer or further from the chair. It is, I conceive, very essential to mark our separation from the Radicals, not only by the difference between our votes, but also by an interval between our quarters in the House. It is essential to give no handle however slight to the calumny

of our enemies, that we are disposed for party purposes to enter into a temporary league with the most bitter opponents of the Constitution.

I am also inclined to think that our retiring below the gangway, and leaving the chief Opposition seats to the Cobbettites and Humeites and Irish blackguards, would produce a very powerful impression on the House. All popular assemblies are very greatly swayed by signs and symbols, by what they see, more than by what they hear. Now this proceeding on our part would be an outward and visible sign of what is now a most important truth, that the chief battle is to be between the Government and the Radicals ; that we as a party are suspended ; or at least that from our weakness we must be umpires rather than parties in the great struggle which the new House is so shortly to witness. It would leave the Government in face of their real and tremendous enemies, and not keep up the empty semblance of a Conservative balance in this mob assembly.

Sir Robert Peel's reply is not among his papers, but it stands recorded (Greville, ii. 361) that, pushed from his usual seat, which was occupied by Cobbett, O'Connell, and the Radicals, he took a seat nearer to the Speaker.

Another of his colleagues, while deploring Peel's weak position in the Commons, and the impotence of the Lords, yet hopes he will not cease to enforce attention to important foreign affairs.

Lord Aberdeen to Sir Robert Peel.

Jan. 25, 1833.

I shall be impatient to see you, and to learn your views respecting our present position, and the course which it may be proper to pursue.

You will be placed in a new and, I fear, painful situation in the House of Commons ; deprived of the support of a numerous body, and that which you receive probably less efficient than it has hitherto been. In the House of Lords, it is true that we possess numbers, but we stand self-degraded, and scarcely dare attempt to exercise authority, after the public confession of our own impotence.

Questions of domestic policy will press so heavily on the attention of Parliament, that I suppose we shall be able to attend but little to foreign matters. The state of Ireland, the Church, the Colonies, the Charters of the Bank and the East India Company, are all so important and so urgent as to engross immediate attention.

Yet it will be a pity if any cause, however strong, should withdraw all notice from the present most extraordinary nature of our foreign relations.

I sincerely hope that in the ensuing Session of Parliament you may continue to find time and inclination occasionally to attend to questions of this nature, and to force them with the same effect on the attention of the House.

The general line of policy which Sir Robert Peel proposed to adopt was thus laid down in principle.

To Mr. Goulburn.

Buckingham House, near Brandon : Jan. 3, 1833.

I presume the chief object of that party which is called Conservative, whatever its number may be, will be to resist Radicalism, to prevent those further encroachments of democratic influence which will be attempted (probably successfully attempted) as the natural consequence of the triumph already achieved.

I certainly think that—as that party will be comparatively weak in numbers ; as victories gained by mere union with the Radicals will promote mainly the views of the Radicals ; as there is no use in defeating, no use in excluding a Government, unless you can replace it by one formed on principles more consonant to your own—our policy ought to be rather to conciliate the goodwill of the sober-minded and well-disposed portion of the community, and thus lay the foundation of future strength, than to urge an opposition on mere party grounds, and for the purpose of mere temporary triumph.

I think it is very difficult to lay down any course of

action in detail. Circumstances which we cannot foresee or control will determine that. I should recommend a system of caution and observation at the first commencement of the Session, rather than that we should be the first to take the field, or instantly begin hostilities. We act on the defensive. The Radicals must move, they must attack. We can, in my opinion, act with more effect after that attack shall have commenced than before.

Take the first day of the Session for instance. Surely it is much better that Cobbett and O'Connell should move an amendment to the Address than that we should. The party that interposes between the two others will have the greatest advantage, relatively I mean to its own intrinsic strength. The best position the Government could assume would be that of moderation between opposite extremes of Ultra-Toryism and Radicalism. We should appear to the greatest advantage in defending the Government, whenever the Government espoused our principles, as I apprehend they must do if they mean to maintain the cause of authority and order.

Possibly we shall find them indifferent to this, and afraid of an open rupture with the Radicals. In that case we must oppose their united forces with all the energy we can, but even so our power will be greater should the union which we resist appear to be the voluntary deliberate act of the Government, rather than an act forced upon them by our precipitate or unreasonable opposition.

These principles apply to domestic politics rather than to foreign. On foreign politics we do not necessarily act on the defensive, and if we feel the Government to be decidedly wrong, we cannot wait, because delay in the expression of an opinion is practically tantamount to acquiescence in the course they are pursuing. However, as to foreign politics we are not bound to make motions at the opening of Parliament, if we feel satisfied that such motions would only serve to strengthen the Government, and by the demonstration of their strength to foreign countries to increase their power of doing wrong.

As for concessions of opinion for the purpose of promoting union of action, it is difficult to say anything without exact information on the subject on which concession may be required, and the nature and extent of the concession. I must own I cannot think beforehand of any point on which I am prepared to concede much, or indeed anything. Take the Currency question for instance. I believe all wavering or doubt upon it to be an evil in itself, now that it is once settled, and I would not therefore consent to little experiments, or plausible inquiries, for the purpose of gaining support to my views on some other question.

I very much doubt whether anything whatever would be gained by a meeting to arrange any course of action, which course of action must be so likely to be disturbed, when the circumstances to which it is to be applied actually occur. If a common sense of danger, and common views on public affairs, do not unite us, when the time for action comes, I am sure preparatory meetings would not—meetings I mean not to discuss a special definite course on a special particular question, but to compare opinions on public affairs generally, and regulate the outline of a campaign.

I by no means say that we can do anything without union and concert as a party, but I doubt whether that union and concert would be ensured or promoted by a meeting such as that to which I have referred.

One of the great objections to it is the certain disclosure of all that passes.

I suppose the 140 members of whom you speak will agree as to the strict appropriation of Church property to purposes *bona fide* connected with the interests of the established religion, and to purposes for which in principle it was originally designed; as to the resistance of all such schemes as excluding the Church from the House of Lords; as to protection of agriculture, the maintenance of public faith to the public creditor, &c.—[*The rest is wanting.*]

To this policy Sir Robert steadily adhered, and the 'majorities of more than six to one' (Walpole's 'History') by which, in the

early divisions of the new Parliament, the Whigs defeated the Radicals and the Irish, were due to aid given conscientiously by his party.

In Ireland five reformed constituencies had returned five O'Connells, and their chief, furious against Whig Coercion, denounced the King's Speech as 'brutal and bloody,' the Address as 'bloody and brutal,' and the Chief Secretary as 'Scorpion Stanley.'

Mr. Croker (January 30) describes the first sittings :

For two nights and a half the vehemence and disorder were so great that people began to think the National Convention was begun. Peel told me that it was frightful, appalling. This induced him to rise, late the third night, and read the House a most able, eloquent, and authoritative lecture.

While he arraigned the foreign policy of Ministers, he expressed his determination to support their Conservative dispositions, and he deprecated those idle and violent debates. The fate of the Government was, and he knew it, in his hands. If he had chosen to listen only to passion and revenge, he could have put them out. He wisely and honestly took the other line, and the effect was instantaneous and prodigious.

Lord Grey is, I hear, loud in praise of Peel. This will give rise to suspicions and rumours, but be assured that Peel is firm, and staunch to his principles and his party.

A month later Sir Robert Peel was holding the same course.

To Mr. Croker.

March 5, 1833.

My belief is, that the Reform Bill has worked for three weeks solely from this, that the Conservatives have been too honest to unite with the Radicals. They might have united ten times without a sacrifice of principle. They might unite on twenty clauses of the Irish [Coercion] Bill.

And what is to happen then? The question is not, Can you turn out a Government? but, Can you keep in any Government, and stave off confusion?

What are we doing at this moment? We are making the Reform Bill work; we are falsifying our own predictions, which would be realised but for our active interference; we are protecting the authors of the evil from the work of their own hands.

On the Malt Tax an offer of support from Peel saved the Government from having to consider the question of resignation.

From Lord Althorp.

April 28, 1833.

As Mr. Holmes gave Ellice a message from you, very handsomely offering to support us if we proposed to rescind the resolution of Friday, I take the liberty of letting you know that we have determined that I should to-morrow give notice, that on Sir John Key's motion on Tuesday I shall move as an amendment, 'That the deficiency in the revenue which would be occasioned by a reduction of the duty on malt to ten shillings the quarter, and by the repeal of the taxes on houses and windows, could only be supplied by the substitution of a general tax on property and income, and an extensive change in our whole financial system, which would at present be inexpedient.'

As I shall not communicate this intention further than to say that we have not resigned, I shall be obliged to you to consider it confidential.

On the Irish Church Bill leading Conservatives anxiously consulted Sir Robert Peel as to the course to be pursued.

From the Duke of Cumberland.

March 11, 1833.

In consequence of the nature of the Irish Church Bill brought in by Lord Althorp, I entered into a correspondence with the Primate of Ireland, which I think I am

bound to communicate to you as our leader in the House of Commons, and am anxious, after your perusal of it, to know if it is in accordance with your views.

From the Archbishop of Canterbury.

Lambeth : March 21, 1833.

I wish much to have some confidential conversation with you in respect to the affairs of the Church in both islands, and if you will be so good as to name any hour, either to-morrow or the next day, when you will be at leisure, I propose to myself the pleasure of calling on you.

From Lord Talbot.

July 14, 1833.

Such contradictory accounts prevail as to what is to happen in the Lords relative to the Irish Church Bill, I mean, as to whether it is to be resisted *in toto*, or whether the principle is to be admitted, and merely alterations or modifications are to be introduced, that I really am at a loss to know, whether it is necessary or advisable that I should come up to town.

If any real stand is to be made against Ministers, I should be sorry to be absent on such an occasion.

I am fully aware that you will naturally say, ‘ Why ask me, who am not a peer ? ’ But you are so well aware of all that passes, that anything you may be good enough to communicate to me will materially assist me in forming my opinion as to the necessity of my coming upon this occasion. Many of my friends on both sides of the question are so very strong in their political feelings that I really wish for some more moderate opinion.

A letter from the Duke of Wellington records how the two statesmen worked together to bring about amendment of the Bill by the House of Lords rather than rejection.

From the Duke of Wellington.

July 23, 1833.

I did not write to you yesterday, as I had persons here all day upon the amendment of the Church Bill.

We shall not be able to do it much good. But I think that if there should be a serious division in the House of Lords, it will be upon some point of importance, on which the Government will be manifestly in the wrong.

The majority of the House of Lords, however, are decidedly against the Bill. It is very difficult to restrain them, and they are very much displeased. But it is better to displease them than to increase and aggravate the confusion of the times.

I quite concur in your opinion of the state of the House of Commons, of the consequences of breaking down the Government by a vote of the House of Lords, and of the prospects from a new election.

But it is not so easy to make men feel that they are of no consequence in the country, who had heretofore had so much weight, and still preserve their properties, and their stations in society, and their seats in the House of Lords.

The true sense of the position will be inspired at last, when they will become more manageable.

Letters preserved by Mr. Goulburn give some record of the business of the Session. The first relates to the notion that the King by his oath was precluded from giving assent to the Irish Church Bill. On this Sir Robert Peel held a strong opinion.

To Mr. Goulburn.

Whitehall : April 26, 1833.

I read the letters in the 'Standard,' and I must say without having even the shadow of a doubt raised by them respecting the force of the Coronation Oath.

I should be very sorry to have it proved to me that Kings of England now and in all time to come were bound by their oaths to refuse their consent to any law which

should affect any right, or any privilege possessed by law by any class of the clergy in the year 1689.

If it be meant that all rights and all privileges of every description then appertaining to all classes of the clergy must be exactly preserved, some very inconvenient consequences will follow. Few kings, I fear, have rigidly observed their oath.

So far as the legislative capacity of the King is concerned, it is utterly impossible, in my opinion, to carry the obligation of the oath further than this. The King should take a deliberate view of the circumstances of the times, of the condition of the Church, of the dangers threatening it from all quarters, and if he is in his conscience convinced that a particular legislative measure will, if passed, endanger the maintenance or the essential interests and rights of the Church, more than the abstaining from such a measure, he ought to reject it.

Perhaps he ought not to consent to its initial stage, but should remove the Ministry which insisted upon its introduction.

This refers the whole matter to the King's judgment and conscience. If he thinks the Church in danger from other causes, and that a particular measure, though diminishing certain privileges, will still avert or mitigate the impending and greater hazard, who can say that he violates his conscience and his oath by doing that which he may deem essential to the very salvation of the Establishment? Is he to go poring into old records, to find out what was the exact condition of every right and every privilege held by any vicar or curate in 1689, in order that he may scrupulously maintain them? Or is he to take a comprehensive view of the condition and dangers of the Church, and do his best to serve, to protect, and perhaps to save it?

Mr. Perceval may differ from the King, may come to a different conclusion as to the danger of the Church, or as to the means of averting it. But what right has he to substitute his judgment for the King's, and accuse the

King of violating the oath which he (the King) took, because the King has come to a different conclusion from his own ?

Charles the First swore 'to preserve to the Church the laws, customs, and franchises granted to the clergy by the glorious King Saint Edward.'

He may have been unwise in giving the Royal assent to a Bill for excluding the bishops from Parliament. Yet, as he honestly believed it was the only alternative 'to prevent their entire degradation,' it would be rather hard to taunt him—who might have saved his life if he would have consented to change Episcopal for Presbyterian Church government—to taunt him with a breach of his oath, because in a terrible crisis he acted for the best, and yielded a reluctant consent to a sacrifice of certain rights and certain privileges of the bishops.

I no more believe that it is a violation of the Coronation Oath to unite Clonfert to a neighbouring see, than that it was a violation of it to make or to sever a union of parishes—that it will be a violation of it to deprive a clergyman of the right to take tithe in kind, after a commutation upon just principles. But I do believe that the real way to injure the Church is to urge exploded and untenable objections to measures by which its interests are affected.

Observe that I do not say whether the extinction of Clogher is right or wrong. The policy of the extinction is quite another question. All I say is that it may be done without any violation of an oath.

May 24.—I shall return to town on Thursday evening, for the purpose of considering with more advantage than it is possible to do in writing the all-important question of the Irish Church.

May 25.—This morning I have received your letter respecting the Irish Tithe question.

One thing is quite clear, that it is of the utmost importance that those who concur sincerely in the main object of protecting the Irish Church from spoliation, and defending it on principle as the Established Church, should

take some course in common, and agree on some line to be pursued in concert by Lords and Commons. Division among ourselves would be pretty nearly fatal.

But I must say that, on this as on other questions, my task of attempting to bring about this concert is a most difficult and a most ungracious one. It seems as if I were asking people to make a concession of their own opinions to mine, when I am merely labouring to bring about a general agreement, at least as to a practical course.

I send you, in the strictest confidence, a letter which I received only yesterday from Lord Stanley. I do not feel myself at liberty to communicate it to any one else.

It is quite clear that your views and his are very far from being in unison.

The alternatives are, the reconciliation of such views and the adoption of a course which each can conscientiously take; or that each, and those who agree respectively with each, should take their own line, and risk the consequences to the Church of disunion among its friends.

I am very much inclined to think that there is much more chance of securing the former of these, namely concert and union, by direct personal communication between the parties, than by the attempt on my part to mediate, at the risk of subsequent misunderstanding, particularly between the Lords and Commons.

June 19.—Having not more than seventy in the House, we thought it best not to expose our weakness by a division on the principle of reducing bishops.

Great changes are to be made in those clauses which affect the interests of the bishops' tenants. The principle of the new arrangements will, I understand, be this, that the Commissioners shall be bound to deal with the tenants as to reserved rents and fines on the same principle, and on terms as favourable, as those on which it has been the usage of the bishops in each see respectively to deal with the tenant—the fine to be increased only in case of future improvements; the Commissioners to be empowered to sell the perpetuity to the tenant, if they can agree.

I saw the agents of the tenants, and told them that I thought the arrangement for them a favourable one. In truth it is simply this, a guarantee against any worse terms than they have at present, and a power of purchasing the perpetuity conferred on them.

I heard yesterday that the 'concession' of the Government as to the application of the surplus was this, that it should be applied to 'religious and charitable purposes.' So far from this being a concession, I hold it to be worse than nothing—worse than the present provision of the Bill. For 'religious' is meant to include the endowment of the Roman Catholic Church, and 'charitable' the relief of the poor in lieu of rate.

Sir H. Willoughby consulted me yesterday as to the policy of taking a division on the proposal that the surplus should be applied 'to ecclesiastical purposes,' that being a vague term, and calculated to swell the numbers on a division. I told him that any addition to his numbers on such grounds would be worth nothing, and entreated him to take the division on the question that the surplus should be applied 'solely to ecclesiastical purposes connected with the established religion.'

June 24.—The newspapers will have detailed the scene we had on Friday night, in consequence of the abandonment by the Government of the 147th clause. I am quite surprised that, after the public declarations in respect to the principle of the clause, any considerations could have induced the Cabinet to agree to its complete abandonment. The surprise and disappointment of tried friends of the Government must have been more galling than the abuse of the Radicals. That was bad enough.

Lord Althorp was absent, very shabbily, unless his indisposition be a real one. I am told the main cause of the abandonment of the clause was a positive order from the King.

The Radicals and enemies to the Church are determined to do what they can to throw out the Bill, on the ground that the removal of the clause which recognised, in their

opinion, the alienation of Church property to State purposes, makes the Bill worse than useless. Their object is to leave the question still unsettled.

What should you advise on this? The choice is between taking no part, and active exertion against the third reading—uniting in vote, but not in design, with the Radicals.

I look at the question mainly, if not exclusively, as the interests of the Irish Church are affected.

In the present or probable future temper of the House of Commons, looking particularly to the influence now possessed under the Reform Act by the Dissenters, shall we get better terms for the Church than the Bill, modified as it now is, will give us? Stanley admitted that there was disunion in the Government on the great question of alienation of Church property, and I strongly suspect that only a threat of resignation on his part has prevented the Cabinet, or a majority of them, from declaring for alienation. Lord John Russell said distinctly that he was for alienation, but that the 147th clause did not involve that principle. Dr. Lushington said the same. The great question, then, is this—Is it best for the Church to submit to this Bill, or to speculate upon the chance of a better?

I see that Mr. Craufurd is beating Kemble with great ease. I am less surprised at this than many of our friends probably are, as I have always thought them much too sanguine as to reaction in public opinion. They mistake the impatience of all restraint, and the necessary unpopularity of all government (particularly when Governments do their duty), for returning sobriety and renewed attachment to Conservative principles. Those who are become sober, and are disposed to be Conservative, have now lost their preponderating influence. The Reform Bill has transferred it to Dissenters in Church and State, who are daily deriving too much advantage from the power they have acquired to be willing to part with it, or to exercise it except for the promotion of their own views and interests. I should doubt whether there was a country in which a

more complete revolution has ever taken place within two years than that which has taken place in Scotland.

Two months later Sir Robert Peel reviews the first Session of a Reformed Parliament. The popular Chamber had not, as Canning predicted, in a few weeks swept away the Lords and the Crown. But it had bent them to its will.

To Mr. Croker.

Drayton Manor: Sept. 28, 1833.

I cannot see much ground for triumph on the part of the promoters of the Reform Bill in the results of last Session.

The business was got through, but only because that which we prophesied took place; namely, that the popular assembly exercised tacitly supreme power; that the House of Lords, to avoid the consequences of collision, declined acting upon that which was notoriously the deliberate judgment and conviction of a majority.

I allude particularly to the Irish Church Bill. With respect to that Bill, it is quite clear that the course taken was taken in spite of the opinions of two out of three branches of the Legislature.

Another letter, written apparently in the recess, discusses further the position of the House of Lords.

To Mr. Goulburn.

(*Confidential.*)

[Dated only in pencil, 1832 or 1833.]

Turn in your mind the question of an amendment to the Address.

There may be an amendment rendered unavoidable by the tenor of the Address, but in respect to that no opinion can be formed until that Address be known.

Of voluntary amendments, not necessarily growing out of and forced on us by an Address to which we cannot consent, I am quite clear that the one to be moved (if any should be moved) would be one to this effect:—

‘That we feel it incumbent on us to assure his Majesty

of our fixed resolution to resist any proposed change in the constitution of the House of Lords.'

The words do not signify at present. We may either use the above words, or adopt the phrase 'organic change,' or speak generally of maintaining the Constitution, of King, Lords, and Commons.

The thing is an amendment directed against the menaces of change in the House of Lords.

On the one hand there is enough in the declaration of members of Parliament, in notices actually given, and in the spirit of the times, to justify such an amendment. It would be a popular amendment, and, whether acquiesced in or resisted by the Government, would embarrass them as a Government.

On the other hand there is the long experience against provocation to battle on the ground of an Address to the Throne.

A material question would also be whether Lord Stanley and his friends would cordially concur.

But the main point is this. The amendment is a hazardous one. Supposing it were resisted by the Government not on its merits, but on plausible objections in point of time, form, occasion, &c., and that we are beaten, the country—all that part of it that is not skilled in parliamentary tactics, and ignorant of the form of putting questions, that is about 999 in 1,000—will consider the decision to be one unfortunate to the House of Lords.

Will it not be said with some justice—'An attack on the House of Lords was inevitable; successful resistance to that attack was certain. But you, for party purposes, marched out from entrenchments which it was impossible to carry, compelled a temporary union between those who must have separated when the assault was made, and prejudiced the cause of the House of Lords, by incurring a voluntary defeat'?

The following letters relate to a paper by Sir Robert Peel on the character of Walpole. The paper itself may be read in Lord Mabon's 'Miscellanies.'

From Lord Mahon.

Dec. 14, 1833.

In our conversation at Hatfield about Walpole, I could not but observe how very accurately you had studied the life and disposition of that Minister. Being now closely engaged in writing a History of England during George the First's reign, I have had to draw a character of Walpole, and I should take it as a particular kindness if you would do me the favour of looking at it (it is not long), and telling me whether you think it generally true. In case you should not have leisure or inclination to comply with this application, I hope at all events that you will be pleased to excuse the liberty I have taken in making it.

I trust I need not add that any opinion which you might be so good as to give would not be quoted or published in my work, but would merely induce me to reconsider and correct a delineation which I should wish to have impartial, and which it is not perhaps very easy to make so.

Dec. 27.—Pray accept my warmest thanks for the very full and valuable criticism which you have had the kindness to send me. I receive it with much gratitude, and shall weigh it with the deepest attention.

On several points, such for instance as my parallel of Lord Strafford, I am convinced at once by the force of your remarks of the erroneous view I had taken; to the others I shall devote a great deal both of reflection and reading, and have no doubt that with such a pilot as I have now obtained, I shall not be found, as would otherwise have been the case, steering far from the right harbour.

CHAPTER IX.

1834.

Chancellorship of Oxford University—Wellington and Peel—Abated Inter-
course—Explanations—Proposed Appropriation of Irish Church Funds
—Resignations of Stanley, Graham, Ripon, Richmond, Althorp, Grey—
Melbourne Prime Minister—Views of Wellington and Peel.

THE death of Lord Grenville early in 1834 caused a vacancy in the Chancellorship of the University of Oxford. In anticipation of this it had been thought desirable to nominate some peer, a member of the University, of academic or literary eminence. But none such being found, overtures were made to the Duke of Wellington, and he, after expressing much diffidence, had placed himself in the hands of an influential body of electors.

The Duke of Wellington to Lord Bathurst.

Strathfieldsaye : Nov. 28, 1833.

Some time ago Lord Sidmouth communicated to me the desire of the Conservative party of the University of Oxford that I should be their Chancellor.

I answered that I had not received a University education ; that I knew no more of Greek or Latin than an Eton boy in the remove ; that these facts were perfectly well known, and that I must be considered incapable and unfit.

I earnestly recommended them to think of others ; and I named the Duke of Beaufort, yourself, Lord Mansfield, Lord Sidmouth, and Lord Talbot.

I received this morning the enclosed letter, and the gentlemen named have been with me.

I repeated to them what I had told Lord Sidmouth, and again recommended them to look to others. I urged them

to consider whether it was absolutely necessary that the Chancellor should be a peer. They answered positively, 'More than ever, and one constantly in the habit of attending the House of Lords.'

I told them that I could not alter my opinion upon the subject, adopted from the first impression, and that I was convinced that it would occur to everybody that I was an example of success in life without academical education, and an example to be avoided rather than an example for the University to hold forth to the youth of the country.

I said they would find themselves in the awkward position of a public body having to make an excuse for their act. Moreover, I felt that if the election should be unfavourable, the defeat would be theirs, not mine; while they would have to bear the odium of having selected an improper person, if the election should be successful.

They answered that they had no doubt of the result, if I would allow that they should propose me.

I then said that in all cases of this kind I considered myself as an instrument to be used by the public, when it was deemed necessary; however, that in a case of this kind, in which personal feeling must have an influence, I wished to have the opinions of others.

I named yourself as one that I should consult. I requested that in the meantime they would consider what I had stated, and whether they could not find another noble lord better qualified than myself. It appears that from delicacy towards Lord Grenville, they do not propose to make any public nomination of a candidate to succeed so long as he shall be alive.

It was not till the vacancy occurred, that an active party addressed a requisition to Sir Robert Peel.

Oxford: Jan. 15, 1834.

We, the undersigned members of Convocation, being convinced that it is of the utmost importance to elect to the office of Chancellor a person who, educated among ourselves, and long connected with the place, has uniformly shown

that he understands and fully appreciates our institutions ; one, too, who, by his academical distinctions, his eminent talents, and his high moral character, is qualified to discharge effectually the duties of the office, and to reflect credit on the University over which he is called to preside, do respectfully and earnestly request that Sir Robert Peel will allow himself to be put in nomination on the day appointed for the election.

Of this resolution a copy was sent by Mr. Hayward Cox to the Duke, with an appeal to him to reconsider his position.

‘ Many,’ Mr. Cox wrote, ‘ of those who have given their names for political reasons, would most assuredly have had greater pleasure, without any disrespect to your Grace’s high claims, in voting for one justly entitled to their preference, and whose political views are understood to be mainly coincident with your own. The document conveys a sentiment generally prevalent here, and such as, in the event of your Grace’s withdrawal, would ensure Sir Robert’s most unequivocal success. A general impression exists in Oxford that, had your Grace been aware of the probability of your friend and colleague being strongly supported, you would not have permitted yourself to be placed in nomination.’

The Duke replied to the effect that the appeal had come too late.

The Duke of Wellington to Mr. Hayward Cox.

There is no man more sensible than I am of the interests, the merits, and the claims of Sir Robert Peel upon the public for his services ; there is no man who more highly esteems his character, or is more attached to his person ; and I must add that I consider that he has all the qualifications to entitle him to the confidence of the University of Oxford as their Chancellor.

It is well known that, from the moment that it was

intimated to me that some persons at Oxford thought of me as a candidate for that office, I have uniformly stated my own feeling that I was not qualified, and that moreover I had not had the advantage of being educated at the University.

I have upon these occasions suggested the names of others, and I recommended that the heads of the principal colleges, and the leading members of the Convocation, should agree among themselves, and then make known their wishes as a body. And I earnestly recommended to the University to select a person who had been educated at the University.

On the 16th instant certain gentlemen of Oxford called upon me with a requisition signed by some of those whom I had desired to agree among themselves as to the person whom they should select to be the Chancellor, and they desired that I should be the person.

I requested them to reconsider the circumstances of the University, the existence of which had occasioned the communication to me. I suggested that this reconsideration might lead to a unanimous and satisfactory choice. But in reply to the call made upon me by so many respectable individuals I stated that I should not decline to attend to the call of the University, if I should be the object of such choice.

The circumstances referred to have, I understand, been reconsidered, and more signatures of some of the most respectable and influential persons at Oxford have been added to the list.

Under these circumstances you have called upon me to decline to be elected, in order to make way for Sir Robert Peel. The first question would be, would Sir Robert Peel accept a nomination of himself made under such circumstances? The second, would the course of conduct proposed to me be quite fair towards the gentlemen whom I desired to consult, and consider, and reconsider, and who, after repeated entreaties on my part that they would choose another person, have come again to me, and to whom I

answered that if I were the object of their choice I would not decline ?

I am convinced that after the perusal of this letter you will be of opinion that the proposal which you have made to me is inadmissible.

In the mean time the other requisition, to which stand appended many of the best names in the University, had been presented to Sir Robert Peel, who at once replied :

To the Warden of Merton.

Drayton Manor: Jan. 17, 1834.

Be good enough to express to those members of the University who have kindly co-operated with you in proposing my name for the Chancellorship of the University, my deep sense of the high honour which the public declaration of their good opinion confers, and my personal obligations to them for the cordial zeal with which they are prepared to exert themselves in promoting my election to that high and most distinguished trust.

It is at the same time my duty to intimate to them without delay, in the most respectful manner, that, although no circumstances can ever abate my affectionate attachment to the University, and my grateful devotion to her interests, I cannot accede to the proposal, however flattering, of being put in nomination for the office of Chancellor.

The Duke of Wellington was then unanimously elected. On Jan. 20 Sir Henry Hardinge writes to Sir Robert Peel :

When I was at Strathfieldsaye six weeks ago, I met Mr. Wintle there, who told me that the Duke had been urging him to force the office upon you by a junction of all parties. The Duke took the same view that you do of the propriety of having a Chancellor with academical pretensions ; and although the compliment is a very honourable one to him, the difficulty in selecting an academical peer ought to be anything but satisfactory to the University.

During the early part of the Session, Sir Robert Peel was much at Drayton. On May 1 he dined with Mr. Arbuthnot to meet the Duke of Wellington, but the absence of the wonted cordiality between the two leaders was so manifest as to confirm impressions that it might end in estrangement, and anxiety on this account gave rise to a correspondence, and a conversation, of which Sir Robert Peel has kept a record, important for the light it throws not only on the personal question, but on his strong feeling in 1832 against taking office to carry a Reform Bill.

Mr. Arbuthnot to Lord Aberdeen.

(*Private.*)

Carlton Gardens: May 2, 1834.

Those whom I see are all of opinion that the Government is in a very tottering state, and that the breaking up of it may occur at any moment.

Should the King be left without a Government, he can only look to the Duke of Wellington and to Peel. Unless these two can act together with cordiality, there could be no hope of safety.

I was well aware that they seldom meet, but I have never been able to learn what it is which has caused this separation. I have hoped that it was rather accidental than intentional, and both you and I felt that it was the duty of mutual friends to bring them together.

For many years the Duke has dined with us on his birthday, and I thought this would be a good opportunity for their meeting. They did meet here yesterday, but I do not think that a single word passed between them. On every account I regretted this exceedingly, and perhaps the more as it was perceived and lamented by Hardinge and Fitzgerald.

I know not which of the two is in fault. Perhaps there is no fault on either side, merely misconception. If so, you, and you I believe alone, could set it right, and you feel, as I well know, that on every ground, public and private, the restoration of cordiality between them is most devoutly to be wished.

The Duke, I know, imagines that Peel does not like

him. In this I am sure he is in error. If there is one subject upon which, when I was seeing Peel daily, he spoke to me more than upon all others, it was in praise and admiration of the Duke, and I saw with delight that in his speech on the repeal of the Union he took the opportunity of stating most beautifully that admiration. It seems therefore to me that the one thing wanted is that they should understand each other. My great hope is that this may ere long be effected by you, and indeed it is on this account that I am troubling you.

I began by telling you that many are of opinion that the present Government cannot last much longer. I know, and indeed you know, that two years ago nothing would have pleased the Duke so much as to see Peel at the head of the Government. And I also know it to be his opinion that in the present state of things the Minister ought to be in the House of Commons.

Whether the Duke would like to take any office in the Cabinet I do not know, but I have always believed that if a change took place, he would like to be Commander-in-Chief, and I am quite certain that, were he in that station, Peel would receive from him the most cordial and strenuous support. I have given you surmises of what I think would be the Duke's objects, if he were to be called into public life again, but you know it is no mere surmise to imagine that it would please him to see Peel Minister.

I do hope that, when you are able to see your friends, you will lose no time in removing a coolness which is so injurious to the public interests, and which ought not to exist between persons who, notwithstanding the coolness, respect each other so highly as the Duke and Peel do. I think it would be worthy of each of them to put aside all little misunderstandings, and to be united as they always used to be.

Lord Aberdeen to Sir Robert Peel.

Leamington: May 5, 1834.

Notwithstanding the private character which Arbuthnot has affixed to the enclosed letter, I believe that I shall not

be wrong in sending it to you, and I hope that the motive might excuse a still greater indiscretion.

For a considerable time past several of our friends have occasionally spoken to me on the subject which Arbuthnot laments in his letter. I have invariably denied that there could be any foundation whatever for such notions, and have always asserted that any appearances of the kind must be purely accidental.

In communicating with Arbuthnot, however, connected as he is with the Duke, the case is different, and I could not avoid seeing that circumstances existed which might very naturally give rise to such impressions. Accordingly I have never lost an opportunity, whenever it has been in my power, of endeavouring to remove misunderstanding and to clear up all misconceptions. These, I have always hoped and believed, were more apparent than real; but I entirely agree with Arbuthnot in thinking that, if any coolness or estrangement were to take place between you and the Duke, it would be the greatest misfortune which could ever befall the country.

He seems to think that I may be essentially useful in preventing anything of this kind, and most assuredly there is no sacrifice I would not readily make in the hope of averting so great a calamity. If Arbuthnot is right in his supposition that I can be of any use, it must only be because you and the Duke both know and are convinced that in my regard for you there is an entire absence of everything like the shadow of an underhand, selfish, or interested object.

Independently of the respect which is due to his character, I should be the most ungrateful of mankind if I could ever forget the confidence and kindness with which the Duke has always treated me. But I am not blind to his imperfections, and so far as I have been able to judge, he certainly appears to me, in a great measure, to have created that state of things which our friends so much lament.

At the same time it would be converting the warmest

friendship into mere flattery, if I were to say that I thought you were entirely blameless.

As I am anxious and determined to do whatever may be in my power to be of use, I address myself to you, with whom I have entire community of feeling. And I do so without the slightest fear or apprehension of misconstruction. Hereafter it will be time enough to decide whether any and what step should be taken with respect to the Duke.

I shall be in town on Wednesday or Thursday next, and very desirous of seeing you, after you shall have had time to consider the contents of Arbuthnot's letter. You may easily imagine that I have written without the least reference to his notion of the present state of the Government, respecting which I know nothing, and in truth feel but little interest. Believe me, my dear Peel,

Ever most truly yours,

ABERDEEN.

From a note of Sir Robert Peel's, it appears that there was, in fact, some lessening of friendly intercourse, due on his side to the following causes. First, it was a natural effect of the wide divergence of opinion and of action in 1832, when Sir Robert Peel refused to join in bringing in a Reform Bill based on principles to which the King was pledged, but which the Tory party had opposed, thereby forcing the Whigs to resign. Also his feelings had been hurt by language which the Duke had used on that occasion in the House of Lords. He had said :

For myself, my Lords, I cannot help feeling that if I had been capable of refusing my assistance to his Majesty, if I had been capable of saying to his Majesty, 'I cannot assist you in this affair,' I do not think, my Lords, that I could have shown my face in the streets for shame of having done it, for shame of having abandoned my Sovereign under such distressing circumstances. I have indeed the misfortune of differing from friends of mine upon this subject, but I cannot regret the steps I have taken. ('Duke of Wellington's Speeches,' i. 546.)

This strong language of the Duke, Sir Robert Peel contrasted with his own reserve, when he might have put as plainly the other side of the question.

A more recent minor cause of the diminished intercourse was, that after the sacrifice which Sir Robert Peel had made in 1829 of his position in Oxford, to perform a public duty and to support the Duke, the Duke should not have had one word to say to him before accepting the Chancellorship, for which he knew that both leaders were proposed.

Note by Sir Robert Peel

(written partly on the back of Lord Aberdeen's letter).

May 10, 1834.

I did not return a written answer to this. I saw Lord Aberdeen on May 9 at his house, and told him that I thought it better to speak than write to him on the subject.

I said there was no misunderstanding between myself and the Duke, but that there had been less communication between us, less of friendly intercourse, for the last two years than there had been previously; that the interruption of such intercourse commenced from the period when the Duke and myself took views so totally different as to the line of conduct to be pursued on the threatened retirement of Lord Grey in May 1832, after his defeat in the Lords on the Reform Bill. I observed that marked differences as to the practical course to be adopted in great emergencies like that must inevitably produce some abatement of confidential intercourse between the parties who differed, and that the ordinary effect of such difference had been in this case increased by the terms in which the Duke of Wellington had explained in the House of Lords his own motives and his own course of proceeding, after he had been invited by the King to form part of a Government, on the retirement of Lord Grey.

I said that the terms in which the Duke expressed what his own feelings would have been, had he refused to accede to the King's wishes, would have very sufficiently

characterised my feelings, had I consented to take office at that time, after all that had then recently passed, on the condition of carrying in all its substantial provisions the Reform Bill ; but that I should have thought it very harsh, to say the least, if I had used corresponding terms to explain the impression under which I had acted ; that I had studiously avoided doing so, when forced to an explanation in the House of Commons by the line taken by the Duke.

I also told Lord Aberdeen that on a more recent occasion—the vacancy in the Chancellorship of Oxford—the Duke's conduct had not been, in my opinion, such as was likely to restore a good understanding between us. It was true that, immediately on hearing of Lord Grenville's death, and long before I heard the Duke of Wellington was likely to be put in nomination as his successor, my resolution was irrevocably taken not to be a candidate, or, I should rather say, to decline under any circumstances the appointment. Still, considering the circumstances under which in 1829 my connection with the University of Oxford terminated, considering that a requisition had been addressed to me on the subject of the Chancellorship, as respectably signed as that addressed to the Duke of Wellington, it did appear strange to me that the Duke of Wellington should determine to be put in nomination without one word of communication with me, direct or indirect—without an attempt to ascertain whether I had a wish to renew with the University of Oxford that connection which had been severed solely through the performance of a public duty, and through fidelity at a trying time to the Duke of Wellington.

I added that, although friendly intercourse in private life had been abated between us—certainly, however, not to the degree supposed by Arbuthnot—that that circumstance had only made me the more anxious on every public occasion in the House of Commons to testify my respect for the Duke, and to do justice to his eminent public services.

The explanations which were given in the two Houses of Parliament in May 1832 will sufficiently explain the

difference of the views taken by the Duke of Wellington and by me respecting entering into the King's service.

The proposal to me at that time was to undertake the Government with the distinct understanding that the King's personal honour was so far pledged to the general principle of the Reform Bill, that the new Government must undertake to settle that question on those general principles to which the King had assented.

I had not a moment's hesitation in rejecting this proposal, having the strongest feeling that the acceptance of it would be accompanied with no satisfactory result, so far as the settlement of Reform was concerned; that any attempt at modification of details, to be made by a party hostile to the whole measure, would be perfectly useless, provoking in the then temper of the public mind suspicion as to our intentions, and contempt for our conduct; and that certain degradation would follow to those individuals of our party who should undertake the Government on such conditions, after the unmeasured vehemence of our opposition to the whole measure of Reform—certain injury to the character of public men as a body.

I would listen to no argument on the subject. The Duke of Wellington might, from the relation in which he had stood to the Crown—the high distinctions and rewards he had received (certainly not higher than his unparalleled services)—he might have no discretion; he might have no option—I am sure he felt he had none—but to obey the commands of the King.

But my case was a different one. Mine was the ordinary case of a public man, opposing most vehemently a public measure, permitting a Government to retire because they could not carry it, and then invited immediately to form another Government, the members of which were not to act on their own views and principles, but were to be bound, as the condition of appointment to office, to carry in all its leading outlines the very measure which they had just defeated, and by the defeat of which they had ousted their predecessors.

I well knew the consequences of my refusal to have any concern with this new Government. I knew that the formation of it would become a matter of extreme difficulty. I knew that the refusal of office by the leader of a party would be a very unpopular act with all those who consider political life a mere game, in which office is the prize to be attained and retained by any means that can be employed. I expected to hear what I did hear, and what will always be heard on similar occasions : ‘ Your general principles are undeniable ; but this is the special case of exception. This is the crisis. All is at stake. The King must be supported, the country must be saved. To be sure, Reform cannot be prevented, but as it is clearly inevitable, why should we not undertake it ? ’

I publicly declared at the time, and I feel now most deeply and sincerely, that a high sense of duty alone—of paramount obligation to the Crown—induced the Duke of Wellington to tender his services to the King. But ten times rather would I have abandoned public life, and dissolved all party connection for ever, than have felt bound to accommodate my course, against my own feeling of what was honourable and right, to another man’s sense of his own peculiar duty, on account of the singularity of his position. Public life would be a miserable servitude if it imposed any such obligation.

Our course on the Catholic question was cited as a precedent. But in my opinion the fact of our having taken that course was in itself a great objection to the recurrence to it by us. And the circumstances are totally different. In 1829 we were in office, were bound by every obligation to tender our advice to the Crown, and, if required, to act upon it. In 1832 we were not in office, and were under no obligation as public men to undertake office on the condition of carrying measures of which we totally disapproved.

Two days later Sir Robert Peel received a faithful picture, in ‘ a few lines,’ of what passed in the Duke of Wellington’s mind, as he looked forward to a possible opportunity which, in fact, was soon to occur.

From Mr. Arbuthnot.

(Private and confidential.)

Carlton Gardens: May 12, 1834.

I was very glad to meet you this morning, and to have had a conversation with you.

There are, however, things one can write which one cannot say, and one cannot say them because, if said, they seem to require observations upon them.

I therefore write these few lines from thinking it desirable that you should know exactly what is passing in the Duke's mind, and from being sure that in so doing I am not betraying confidence.

He told me yesterday that he had met Hardinge, and that he had said to him that things were in that state which might make it necessary for you to make up your mind at a moment's warning, what course you would pursue. I don't think that he said much more to Hardinge, except indeed that the Minister must be in the House of Commons; but in speaking to me he declared his own views as to himself, more distinctly than he ever did before.

He observed that it would not do for him to be a Secretary of State for the Colonies, or at the Foreign Office; for to effect this some one must be put aside, and that this he would not like. Upon my saying that it would never do for him to be out of office, if a Government upon our principles was to be formed, and that his influence in the House of Peers would be essentially necessary, he asked me, pointing to the Horse Guards, why he should not be there again; and he expressed his conviction that Lord Aberdeen would be an excellent leader in the Lords.

The present Government may not break up, and my telling you what the Duke's views and opinions are may be very unnecessary; but it would be no surprise if a change were to take place to-morrow, and it seems to me very desirable that you should not be in ignorance of what is passing in the Duke's mind.

I believe that he speaks to me more openly than he does to most persons, and I think that I am rendering him a service, as I am meaning also to render one to you, by letting you know what his thoughts and objects are.

In my position, and at my time of life, I can have no selfish motive of my own. I have no other anxiety than to see the country saved ; and I have long believed that by no human means can it be saved, except by the cordial union and concurrence of you and the Duke of Wellington.

Supposing that the King had to form a new Government, I should hope that he would send for you and the Duke at the same time. The Duke would represent the absolute necessity of having the Minister in the House of Commons, and he would exert himself most strenuously in aiding you to form a Government. It then would be settled between you what share in it he was to take ; but I know that his object is the Horse Guards.

Here the note might have ended, but, 'as he was writing,' Mr. Arbutnot goes on to comment on the conversation with Lord Aberdeen, which, of course, had been communicated to him. On this he says :

There have been misconceptions, and these have been unfortunate, as they have led to painful results. But nothing in point of fact has occurred which ought to prevent the cordiality for which I am most anxious, both on public and private grounds.

One misconception I think I have the power of removing. I am alluding to the Duke's declaration that he should have been ashamed of showing his face in the street if he had not endeavoured to form a Government for the King. He not only was not adverting to the line that you had taken—for I knew well that your line was not in his thoughts at the time—but in point of fact he was considering only and exclusively his own position, as being indebted to the Crown for everything he has. This was no afterthought, thus to consider his own position, for he had

told me before, as he has told me since, that whatever the sacrifice to him might be, he never could refuse the King's call, whenever and under whatever circumstances it might be made.

This notion of his duty may be a right one, or a wrong one. But I can declare to you that it is the one which he has ever had, and all I lament is that he did not so explain it; as it must have clearly proved that he was not drawing a contrast between your conduct and his own.

I have given this explanation because I know it to be the true one, and because I had been aware, before Lord Aberdeen talked with me, that with some of your friends at least an unpleasant construction was put upon what the Duke had said.

I have now only to request that you will not make any reply to what I have written.

Not a word should I have written if your uniform language to me about the Duke had not been clear proof how highly you respect and value him, and if his tone about you had not responded in all things to all that you could ever say respecting him.

Without recent communications, you and the Duke have taken the same views, and have followed precisely the same course. Were a Government to be formed, not a single explanation of your respective sentiments would be necessary. And I can take upon myself to assure you that if you and he begin to talk together as you used to do, there will be as perfect union of opinion as if you had but one mind between you.

The political situation now developed rapidly. Lord Stanley declared against any diversion of Irish Church revenues to secular uses, Lord John Russell made a counter-declaration, and a private member, Mr. Ward, instigated (it was said) by the Radical Lord Durham, gave notice of a resolution to pledge the House of Commons to such appropriation.

Sir Robert Peel was at Drayton, and his lieutenant wrote to obtain his counsel how to treat the motion.

From Mr. Goulburn.

May 24, 1834.

Ward's motion, if not intended to bring the Government differences to issue, is calculated to do so, and I hear that the Government mean to meet it by the previous question.

To me I confess it would seem more satisfactory to say no to the proposition. But nevertheless I think it would be safer to support the Government, if they move the previous question, than to take the other course, of having the question put, with a view to negative it.

I wish sincerely that you could have been here, as there will be (if the motion comes on) a necessity for dexterity and management which I do not feel up to.

Let me hear from you, and give me your ideas as to what we had better do.

In reply Sir Robert Peel did not confine his advice to the particular occasion, but reaffirmed his general objection to any union with Radicals against the Whigs. He wished that, when the Government broke up, it should be manifestly due to their own inherent weakness. That would give the best opening for Conservative successors.

To Mr. Goulburn.

Drayton Manor : May 25, 1834.

I concur in your opinion that a union in vote between the enemies of the Church and its friends, however technically to be accounted for by the nature of the question, is dangerous policy, peculiarly dangerous when the numerical strength of the friends of the Church is so small.

I would much rather give a direct negative to Mr. Ward's resolutions than vote for the previous question, if the choice were between the two, and I were sure of carrying either one or the other.

But if the effect of my uniting with the enemies of the Church in the first vote were, as I think it probably would be, to alienate from the support of the Church many

lukewarm supporters, I might be making the condition of the Irish Church even worse than it is at present.

So much for the individual vote and question. But taking a more general and comprehensive view, looking at the present state of parties and of politics, my opinion is decidedly against all manœuvring, all coquetting with Radicals, for the mere purpose of a temporary triumph over the Government. I attribute much of the present weakness of the Government, and still more of the present strength of the Conservative party, to the adherence to principle by that party, and to their forbearance from the little devices and artifices by which perhaps in other days parties were strengthened.

How can the Conservative party, if again called to the Government, hope to maintain itself, except by conciliating the goodwill, at least by mitigating the hostility, of many of the more moderate and respectable supporters of the present Government? The surest way to prevent this is by finesse, and party tactics.

If the present Government breaks up through its own differences and misunderstandings, there is ground for a forcible appeal to the country in behalf of their successors. If it breaks up, or avails itself of the pretext of breaking up, in consequence of a union between Radicals and Conservatives, in my opinion the Government which succeeds it will have a very shortlived triumph. For it will have opposed to it the adherents of the present Government and the Radicals.

As the day drew near for Ward's motion, rumours were rife as to its probable effects on the Government, and Mr. Arbuthnot reports a significant conversation with Lord John Russell's brother, afterwards Duke of Bedford.

From Mr. Arbuthnot.

(Private and confidential.)

Carlton Gardens : May 26, 1834.

This morning I met Lord Tavistock. He began at once to talk of the present state of public affairs.

The differences of opinion in the Cabinet, he said, were evident to the whole world, and they were to such an extent that it would be quite impossible for the Government to hold much longer together. Indeed, in his opinion, an immediate resignation might be expected.

Upon his asking me what could be done in case Ministers should resign, I told him that there were only two or three with whom I communicated confidentially, and that they wished nothing more than to see the present Government able and willing to govern the country, and deprecated nothing so much as being called upon to take office. I knew that this was your feeling—that your wish was to have such measures brought forward by those now in power as you could support, and that nothing—I was convinced—but a duty which you could not resist would induce you to accept office yourself. I added that there were circumstances which made duty paramount to everything else, and that my knowledge of you gave me the conviction that you would always act upon a sense of duty.

He said that this was what he and others thought of you, but he felt sure that the call ere long would be made, and that you could not resist it.

He then observed that on a change of Government there must be a dissolution; that his expectation was that in the next House of Commons there would be much fewer Whigs, many more Tories, and many more Radicals also.

This, I told him, was my expectation also, and if we were right in this, it was evident a Tory Government could not have strength to carry on the affairs of the country, should the Whigs in a body determine to oppose it in conjunction with the Radicals.

This he felt confident would not be the case. He for one should wish well (that was his expression) to the new Government, and he was confident there would be a similar feeling in all those Whigs who were anxious to uphold property, and to preserve the country.

At one time, he said, he had feared the present Government would be followed by a Radical one; but he was now

certain that the country at large detested and feared the Radicals, and that nothing would give so much satisfaction generally as to see a Government formed with sufficient strength to save us from revolution, and to preserve the monarchy.

I was anxious not to be led to say more than was absolutely necessary. On taking leave of him, I asked if he had seen Lord Althorp lately, and what he thought of the present state of things.

He replied that he had just come from him, and that he had left him in high spirits upon the expectation of being soon released from office.

He stopped me to say that he imagined that Ministers would have to resign after Mr. Ward's resolutions of to-morrow night, as upon that occasion so many of the Government and of their supporters would be at variance with each other, that the remaining longer in office would be impossible. But whether there was a resignation on Wednesday morning or not, it could not long be deferred.

I was going away, when he again stopped me to say, that he did not think we should get Stanley, if an offer were made to him ; but that he was a man of great ability, and that it would be worth while to make the trial.

I asked him whether he did not think it would do great injury to make an offer, with the near certainty of its being refused.

Upon this he entreated me to believe that he knew nothing of Stanley's sentiments or intentions ; that he had given me his own surmises, and that he hoped what he had said, coming as it did entirely from himself, would not be acted upon.

I believe I have repeated to you very faithfully, and almost verbatim, all that passed. I have told it to the Duke of Wellington and to Hardinge, and neither of them will utter a word of it to any human being. I shall mention it to Aberdeen, if I can see him, but not to a soul else.

The Duke desired I would write it to you, and indeed I had meant to do so.

To Mr. Arbuthnot.

Drayton Manor: May 27, 1834.

I am very much obliged to you for the very full and clear account you have sent me of your conversation with Lord Tavistock.

I have long felt that the best chance—and that probably a very fair one—for the establishment of a Conservative Government would be the failure of the present Government from its own weakness, or dissensions, the Conservatives having manifested no anxiety for power, having adhered to principle, above all having eschewed all the finesse and petty manœuvring, which might perhaps in former times be useful elements of party tactics, when there were but two parties in the State, and those pretty equally balanced.

The only hope can be that the country, wearied by successive and frequent changes of Government, will at length determine that there shall be a Government, and will give it confidence, until there be cause shown for withdrawing it.

Many people think that the whole art of conducting a party consists in eternal fussy manœuvring, and little cunning schemes for putting a Government in a minority.

I believe, on the contrary, that the present strength of the Conservative party and the present condition of the Government have mainly resulted from our having taken exactly the opposite course—from our having kept aloof from Radical union, and from our having honestly supported the Government whenever we thought the Government right.

Ward's motion was set aside by 396 to 120; and, in protest against Lord John Russell's designs upon the revenues of the Irish Church, Lord Stanley, Sir James Graham, Lord Ripon, and the Duke of Richmond resigned. Two more Ministers, it afterwards transpired, Lansdowne and Spring Rice, were also opposed to the appropriation scheme. Soon afterwards Althorp,

the popular leader of the House of Commons, having (through Mr. Littleton, Chief Secretary for Ireland) committed himself in negotiations with O'Connell for mitigation of a severe Coercion Bill in hand, and having been outvoted by his colleagues, found it necessary to retire from office; and thereupon Lord Grey, not seeing his way to carry on his Government without Althorp's aid, also resigned. So near did the Whig Ministry come to 'failure from its own weakness or dissensions.'

Speculations were rife as to the Tories coming again into power. 'Yesterday it was generally expected,' writes Greville, 'that Peel would be sent for, or the Duke of Wellington. . . . It is expected that Peel, if called upon, will endeavour to form and carry on a Government; but opinions are greatly divided as to the support he would get in the House of Commons, and as to the result of a dissolution, should he be driven to adopt that hazardous alternative.'

The Whig Ministry did not, however, finally collapse. After a feeble attempt of the King (see 'Memoirs of Sir Robert Peel,' ii. 1-13) to obtain a coalition of all parties against the Radicals, the Whig Ministry was patched up under Lord Melbourne, resting chiefly on the popularity of Lord Althorp, who was induced to withdraw his resignation, and resume the lead of the House of Commons.

In July, Parliament was prorogued, and Sir Robert Peel returned to Drayton. How little he was engaged there in any plot for coming back to power may appear from his communications during the autumn to the friend to whom he was least likely to be reticent on the subject.

To Mr. Goulburn.

Drayton Manor : Aug. 22, 1834.

I am organising a small conspiracy against the partridges, which will explode on Monday morning the eighth of September. Hardinge is a leading member of it. If you have nothing better to do, do come.

September 3, 1834.—I see my way through every part of a voluntary Tithe Commutation Bill, excepting one, and that the most important part.

I would have a Board in London, the members of which should be partly appointed by the Crown as representative of general interests, and partly by the Archbishop of Canterbury as representative of the Church.

I would authorise this Board to despatch agents on 'tithe circuits,' if I may so call them, throughout the country. The agent should personally visit each parish at a stated time, of which public notice should be given, should distinctly explain that he had no power to compel anything, but that his object was, with the good will of the tithe-payer and the tithe-receiver, to ascertain facts, invite them to amicable discussion of their respective interests, and suggest the basis on which there might be a perpetual commutation of tithe.

I would not have any agreement final without the consent of the central Board in London, whose principal use would be to lay down general principles of equitable compromise, and ensure as much uniformity in practice as the nature of the case would admit.

The main difficulty, however, is this. What is to be done in the case of redemption of tithe, with the sum paid down as an equivalent? How is it to be invested?

There is another consideration also that somewhat disinclines me to propose a plan. Lord Althorp will certainly propose one. His probably will be preferred. I should therefore propose mine with little hope of success. Every concession on the part of the Church made by me—which concession might be very wise, if there were a confident expectation of some practical result—would be taken advantage of by the enemies of the Church, who would argue that claims which I was willing to abandon or mitigate must be unreasonable and indefensible, and would start from that point, refusing the equivalent compensation which I might have asked for as the condition of relinquishing or reducing the claim of the Church.

If Lord Althorp's measure should seem an utterly impracticable one, the objections to the proposal of a voluntary commutation would be much diminished, and it may

be desirable to be prepared with one. In this view I should be most thankful to you to consider the question, in its principles and details.

I went suddenly to Blackburn the other day, to see an estate I have in the neighbourhood. My effort to escape unnoticed failed, but the only inconvenience I suffered was not from a Radical but a Conservative assembly (mob I must not call them), headed by pensioners, who insisted for a long time on dragging me for about a mile into the town, preceded by an enormous flag and a band of music. I escaped this infliction, but was pursued to the inn by my friends, who of course congregated half the town in front of the inn ; and, considering Dr. Bowring was rejected only by six votes as member, I was surprised at the good will of (I suppose) his adherents. The professional men and chief shopkeepers were Conservative.

In Lancashire, as in London, there was already some reaction. But had Sir Robert Peel and the Duke of Wellington been allowed to bide their time, they certainly were not inclined as yet to attempt the task of Government, with or without an appeal to the country.

CHAPTER X.

1834-5.

Melbourne dismissed—Peel called from Rome—Forms a Government—Overtures to Stanley and Graham—Conservative Reform—Retrenchment—Dissenters' Marriages—Church Reform—Correspondence with the King—General Election.

THE time had come when Sir Robert Peel was to hold the first place in the councils of the Crown, but as yet only for a few months, being without such support in Parliament, or in the country, as could maintain him longer in power.

His attempt to overcome the difficulties of the task, increased by the King's having summoned him too soon, is recorded in his own narrative, from which are given here brief extracts, with the addition of many private papers now first published.

From Sir Robert Peel's Memoir.

I left England for Italy on October 14, 1834, with Lady Peel and my daughter Julia, little foreseeing the probability of my sudden recall.

I had been at Rome about ten or eleven days, when Mr. Hudson arrived there, bearing the letters following.

From the King.

The King, having had a most satisfactory and confidential conversation with the Duke of Wellington on the formation of a new Government, calls on Sir Robert Peel to return without loss of time to England, to put himself at the head of the Administration of the country.

In the meantime his Majesty has appointed the Duke

of Wellington First Lord of the Treasury and Secretary of State for the Home Department, in order to hold the Government till the return of Sir Robert Peel.

Pavilion, Brighton : Nov. 15, 1834.

From the Duke of Wellington.

Brighton : Nov. 15, 1834 (at night).

You will have heard of the death of Lord Spencer.

When Lord Melbourne announced it to the King he mentioned the necessity of securing [the present] Lord Spencer's services in some high and responsible office, but he apprehended some difficulty in this respect.

I enclose an extract of Lord Melbourne's letter, and the King's final answer after he had seen Lord Melbourne.

The King asked me to undertake to make a Government for him.

I told his Majesty that the difficulty of the task consisted in the state of the House of Commons, and that all our efforts must be turned to get the better of these difficulties, that I earnestly recommended to his Majesty to choose a Minister in the House of Commons, and that you should be the person.

His Majesty answered that he would not have hesitated if you had been in England, but that as you were abroad, and it was necessary to act immediately, he had sent for me.

I then told him that I thought nothing would be more unfair than to call upon you to put yourself at the head of a Government which another individual should have formed; that it would be injurious to you and to his Majesty himself; but that, as it appeared to be necessary to take possession of the Government, I was perfectly ready to hold for the present the offices of the First Lord of the Treasury and Secretary of State for the Home Department, till you should return home; and that the Seal might be put in commission.

I only request you to return home as soon as you can.

*Lord Melbourne to the King.**(Extract.)*

Nov. 12, 1834.

Your Majesty will recollect that the Government in present form was mainly founded upon the personal weight and influence possessed by Earl Spencer in the House of Commons, and upon the arrangement which placed in his hands the conduct of the business of Government in that Assembly.

That foundation is now withdrawn, and in these new and altered circumstances it is for your Majesty to consider whether it is your pleasure to authorise Viscount Melbourne to attempt to make such fresh arrangements as may enable your Majesty's present servants to continue to conduct the affairs of the country; or whether your Majesty deems it advisable to adopt any other course.

Viscount Melbourne earnestly entreats that no personal consideration for him may prevent your Majesty from taking any measures, or seeking any other advice, which your Majesty may think more likely to conduce to your Majesty's service, and to the advantage of the country.

Whatever may be your Majesty's views, Viscount Melbourne humbly conceives that they will be forwarded and assisted by a full and unreserved communication upon the present state of public affairs.

The King to Lord Melbourne.

The King, after the very confidential conversation with Viscount Melbourne on the state of the country in consequence of the removal of Viscount Althorp to the House of Peers, thinks it right to inform Lord Melbourne that his Majesty conceives that the general weight and consideration of the present Government is so much diminished in the House of Commons, and with the country at large, as to render it impossible that they should continue to conduct the public affairs in the House of Commons, and particularly when it is considered the King's confidential servants

cannot derive any support from the House of Lords, which can balance the want of success in the Commons.

His Majesty therefore, under this view and the apprehension of contingencies which the King has expressed to Lord Melbourne verbally, does not think it would be acting fairly or honourably by his Lordship to call upon the Viscount for the continuance of his services in a position of which the tenure appears to the King so precarious.

His Majesty need, however, hardly repeat the assurance, so often conveyed to Lord Melbourne, of the high sense the King entertains of his Lordship's valuable services and character.

WILLIAM R.

Pavilion, Brighton : Nov. 14, 1834.

The ' contingencies ' here referred to, and summarised in the Duke's letter (see Memoir), were recorded fully by the King.

Memorandum.

(*Private.*)

Nov. 14, 1834.

The contingencies of which the King expressed his apprehensions verbally to Lord Melbourne were :

The further encroachments upon the establishment of the Protestant Church, which, from the communication which Lord Duncannon had made to his Majesty, and the language held by others of Lord Melbourne's colleagues, appeared to be meditated by them.

The use which some of them seemed disposed to make by anticipation of the results of the Commission of Inquiry into the State of the Irish Church, which his Majesty had sanctioned as a measure of simple inquiry, and which he had invariably declared to be so considered by himself, but which some of the members of the Government, and more particularly Lord John Russell, had declared to be preliminary to extensive reforms, such as his Majesty did not contemplate, and determined to resist.

He could not look with confidence or security to the services of a leader of the House of Commons on the Government side who was so pledged ; and he could not

help considering Lord John Russell to be otherwise unequal to the task.

N.B.—His Majesty was aware also, from what Lord Melbourne had stated to him, that both Lord Lansdowne and Mr. Spring Rice had signified their intention of retiring if the measures contemplated by some of their colleagues should be passed. Hence a schism in the Cabinet was threatened upon a leading question, and one upon which his Majesty was, in feeling and principle, opposed to the advocates of encroachment.

W. R.

From the Duke of Wellington.

(Private and confidential.)

Brighton: Nov. 15, 1834.

You will observe that the King's case is not quite one of his Ministers quitting him. I think that it might have been such a one, if his Majesty had not been so ready to seize upon the first notion of difficulties resulting from Lord Spencer's death.

Lord Brougham swears that they are turned out. However, it is quite clear that they could not go on, and they are all, particularly Lord Melbourne, delighted to be relieved.

I don't think that we are at all responsible for the King's quarrel with them. It was an affair quite settled when he sent for me.

From Sir Robert Peel's Memoir.

These letters were delivered to me at my residence in Rome. I delivered to Mr. Hudson letters in reply, and made immediate preparations for my departure.

By rapid and continued travelling the journey was accomplished in twelve days. The Memoir proceeds:

I had ample opportunity for considering various important matters, coolly and without interruption, during my journey.

I greatly doubted the policy of breaking up the Government of Lord Melbourne at that time. I entertained little

hope that the Ministry about to replace it would be a stable one—would command such a majority in the House of Commons as would enable it to transact the public business. I was not altogether satisfied, by the accounts I first received, with the sufficiency of the reason for the dissolution of the late Government, namely, the removal of Lord Althorp to the Lords, and the objections of the King to Lord John Russell, as Lord Althorp's successor in the lead of the House of Commons.

However, very little consideration was necessary to convince me that I had no alternative but to undertake the office of Prime Minister instantly on my arrival. The King's course had been decided on. The former Government was dismissed from office. Had it been possible that I should have been consulted previously, I might have dissuaded the act of dismissal as premature and impolitic. But I could not reconcile it to my feelings, or indeed to my sense of duty, to subject the King, and the monarchy, to the humiliation, through my refusal of office, of inviting his dismissed servants to resume their appointments. My refusal could only have been founded on avowed disapprobation of the course taken by the King.

Little sanguine as I was of success, I was firmly resolved therefore to obey the King's commands, and to direct every energy to the arduous duties which awaited me on my arrival in England.

I arrived in London very early on the morning of December 9, having travelled all night from Paris. I waited on the King immediately, before I saw any other person, and placed my services at his Majesty's disposal, informing his Majesty that I thought it of importance that I should not delay a moment in accepting the office of First Lord of the Treasury and Chancellor of the Exchequer—I mean that I should not show that doubt and hesitation which consultation with others might imply, or make my acceptance of office contingent upon the answers which I might receive from others, whom it might be my duty to invite to enter into the King's service.

His Majesty was very cordial in his assurances of unreserved confidence and zealous support. I requested his Majesty's permission to write at once to Lord Stanley and Sir James Graham, earnestly entreating them to give me the benefit of their co-operation as colleagues in the Cabinet, and with the King's ready assent I wrote that day to each of them.

To Lord Stanley.

(*Extract.*)

Whitehall : Dec. 9, 1834.

It is impossible for me to enter upon the very arduous duties assigned to me without making an earnest effort to procure for his Majesty and for the country the immense advantage of your co-operation, and I infinitely prefer to make at once a direct appeal to you for your assistance rather than resort to any indirect means of attempting to ascertain beforehand the public result of my proposal.

If I thought the offer involved on either side any compromise of public principle, I should scorn to make it, as I know you would to accept it. But the great practical questions on which serious difference could have arisen between us are, I trust, finally and irrevocably settled ; and, advert- ing to the course we have respectively taken since their settlement, I cannot recall to mind, nor can I foresee, any such disagreement as to the principles on which the Govern- ment of this country should be hereafter conducted as should discourage the present appeal.

In Lord Stanley's answer the chief points are as follows :

From Lord Stanley.

Woodcote : Dec. 11, 1834.

I acknowledge that recent events have narrowed the ground of difference which heretofore divided us ; and I add with pleasure that my respect no less for your private character than for your recognised ability would render me not unwilling, from any personal consideration, to serve in an Administration of which you were the chief.

But our agreement upon some points must not blind us to the fact that throughout the last four years we have been placed in opposition to each other upon questions hardly less important.

On most of the measures introduced by Lord Grey's Government we have been brought into collision, I acting as a member of the Government, you as the avowed leader of a political party arrayed in organised opposition to it.

It is true that at the close of Lord Grey's Government you passed no such sweeping censure [as the Duke of Wellington did] upon all his measures : but in detail you had opposed many of them, and objected to the principles on which some were founded, especially to the whole scope and tendency of the foreign policy pursued.

A few months only have elapsed ; the Duke of Wellington is the person who received the first mark of his Majesty's confidence. This circumstance alone must stamp upon the Administration about to be formed the impress of his name and principles ; and this Administration I am asked to join ; you being its acknowledged head, the Duke of Wellington filling the important office of Foreign Secretary, and your followers being the principal constituent parts of the Government.

You will not mistake me if I say that private feeling as well as political judgment alike disincline me to the adoption of this proposal. The sudden conversion of long political opposition into the most intimate alliance—no general coincidence of principle, except upon one point, being proved to exist between us—would shock public opinion, would be ruinous to my own character, and injurious to the Government which you seek to form.

But if, as the tone of your letter leads me to believe, the measures of your Government, not resisting but directing the national desire of temperate improvement in all our institutions, to the utmost extent consistent with their safety and integrity, should enable me to give you an independent support in the House of Commons, I may venture perhaps to say that out of office I should have all the

means of rendering you assistance, of which my present acceptance of office would altogether deprive me.

To Lord Stanley.

Whitehall: Dec. 12, 1834.

Your letter precludes the hope of your co-operation as a Minister of the Crown, but it does not preclude the hope that the conduct of the Government will be viewed by you with an impartial and dispassionate judgment, and with a disposition to give to those whom the King may call to his service at a crisis of great difficulty such support as you can give consistently with principle and conviction.

It would be unbecoming in me to thank you for an assurance which is merely dictated by a high sense of duty ; but I may say without impropriety that I shall be proud if the Government shall succeed, by the prudence and temperance of its policy, in gradually establishing a claim on your approbation and confidence.

Similar terms were made with Sir James Graham. 'He came up to town,' Sir Robert Peel writes, 'from Netherby, and, although he declined office, assured me of his warm personal regard and general desire to give me all the support he could, consistently with his own principles and avowed opinions.'

After referring to the question of dissolution, as settled before his return, the Memoir proceeds.

As might have been expected from the honour and scrupulous delicacy of the Duke of Wellington, I found every other question, every appointment to office, entirely open to consideration.

By far the most painful duty was that of selection between parties of equal or nearly equal fitness for office. I had to lament that in one or two cases I signally failed to reconcile parties to the decision to which I came, and was considered to have inflicted positive wrong because I did not reinstate them in the positions which they held at the

breaking up of the Duke of Wellington's Government in November 1830.

I was supported, however, by the consciousness that their disappointment did not arise from any preference given to personal objects of my own.

Among the letters informing Mr. Peel as to the position of affairs were these :

From Mr. Dawson.

Nov. 22, 1834.

The press is very favourable, and I have already had an unconditional offer of the ' Standard ' for your service.

The conduct of the King has been admirable. He has shown great judgment and great decision, and he told the Duke of Wellington that he was prepared to give unlimited confidence and support.

I think you cannot but approve of the clearsightedness of the Duke. It is a masterpiece to have dispossessed the late Ministers of their power in so short and decisive a manner, and it is evident that the Whigs are thrown into confusion by their sudden and complete ejection from office.

It is impossible to praise too highly the delicate chivalry of the Duke with regard to you. I dined with him on Wednesday, and he told me that he should take no step, that he should not utter an opinion, until your arrival; that he looked upon you as the only man to steer the country through its difficulties; that he occupied his present position solely to resign it in the fullest manner to you; and that on your arrival you should not find one single thing done to fetter your judgment.

I think nothing can be more gratifying to your feelings than such conduct. But how much more to your honour is the universal assent given by the whole nation to this extraordinary interregnum till your arrival.

If ever man had reason to be proud of the tribute paid to his public character, you are he. The King, the leaders of a great and powerful party, the whole public consent to remain in a state of dormancy until the arrival of one man,

in whose favour all unite to place him in the most prominent station.

It is a glorious opportunity, and under your guidance alone the country has a hope of safety.

From Lieutenant-Colonel Lindsay.

Balcarres : Dec. 8, 1834.

I cannot resist the pleasure of congratulating you with all my heart that this country has at last done you justice, and called you to the helm in these perilous times, when the greatest man in Europe has pointed to you as the only individual now capable of conducting the Government.

In Scotland the name of the Duke is still unpopular as a statesman, connected with the cry of No Reform. But they readily accept of you, and some of the Whigs consider you as belonging to them. And this will be the general feeling amongst them in this country, if any declaration of reform is made by you.

The people in the boroughs are still very Radical ; the agricultural population are now all Conservative. If you decide on a dissolution you will have a better return from Scotland than last time. But the change of opinion in favour of Conservative measures is not so great here as in England.

Mr. Croker, to whom Sir Robert Peel announced his arrival from Rome, had replied advising him not to be hampered with the inferior men of former Administrations. 'Get, if you can, new men, young blood, the ablest, the fittest ; and throw aside boldly the claims of all the mediocrities with which we were overladen in our last race.' After Lord Stanley's refusal, Croker records that 'Peel twice over said, with a querulous tone, that it would be only the Duke's old Cabinet.' As regards any claims of his own, Croker had declared that nothing would induce him to enter the reformed House of Commons. A list made by the Duke of Wellington, of persons to be considered for office, does not include Croker's name.

To the few letters in the Memoir relating to appointments the following are now added. The first is from a country gentleman in Lancashire.

From Mr. Hulton.

(Private and confidential.)

Hulton Park : Dec. 4, 1834.

It may not be unacceptable to you to peep into the house at Knowsley, and I therefore write to you, in the strictest confidence.

My authority (and better there cannot be) says :

‘I am persuaded that a union may be effected between Edward [i.e. Lord Stanley] and Sir R. Peel, if the latter is to be really, and not ostensibly only, at the head of the Administration. But I believe that he fears that the Duke of Wellington may assume the power, and thinks, as many others do, that the principle of his former Ministry was command and not consultation, and that he interfered in various departments. If Edward is persuaded that Peel is to be *bona fide* Minister, much of the difficulty would be got over.’

I need only add my fervent prayer that you may be destined by the Almighty to save the country at this moment of peril.

To Mr. Hulton.

Whitehall : Dec. 11, 1834.

I did not permit ten minutes to elapse, after I had seen the King on the day of my arrival and undertaken the arduous duty which I could not decline, without writing to Lord Stanley, earnestly seeking his co-operation in conducting the King's Government. What may be the result of my appeal I do not yet know, but I had not a moment's hesitation as to the clear propriety, on every ground of public principle, of making it, in the most prompt and direct manner, and in, I trust, a fair and liberal spirit.

From Mr. J. W. Freshfield, M.P.

Dec. 9, 1834.

I am sure, from an inquiry of some extent, that the country is prepared and anxious to support a rational and respectable Government, but too much care cannot be taken to avoid Ultra-Toryism, and hungry inferior men, and

apprehensions are entertained that too many of the latter class will be again employed. Sincere honourable men will do more, and sustain the Government better, than men of management and cunning.

From my heart I wish you success. I do not doubt it, and would sacrifice my life to promote it.

To Mr. Freshfield.

(*Private.*)

Dec. 11, 1834.

As my first act was to make a liberal offer to Lord Stanley and Lord Graham, I have given the best proof of my desire to form the King's Government on a wide basis.

To Mr. Edmund Peel.

Whitehall: Dec. 10, 1834.

I came to town yesterday morning—having been in bed only one night since I left Lyons—saw the King, told him office entailed the greatest sacrifice upon me, and that I should have been most happy if he could have dispensed with my services, but, being called upon, I could not shrink from the duty of attempting to form and to conduct a Government.

I told him my mind was made up that the Government must be formed upon a basis as wide as was compatible with the honour and consistent opinions of public men of high character, and that I must at once advise a fair and sincere offer to Lord Stanley. I wrote to him last night, and to Sir James Graham.

Julia travelled over Alps, precipices, and snow, eight nights out of twelve, in the carriage.

To the King.

(*Confidential.*)

Whitehall: Dec. 12, 1834.

Sir Robert Peel with his humble duty to your Majesty has the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your Majesty's notes respecting Lord Londonderry and Lord Rosslyn, which he knows that he is justified in considering as suggestions which your Majesty kindly offers for considera-

tion and upon which your Majesty does not wish Sir Robert Peel to pronounce at present any decisive opinion.

It appears to Sir Robert Peel that it will be very desirable to present, as far as possible, to the public, the arrangements of your Majesty's Government as a whole measure, and that separate appointments should not be notified to the public until the entire Cabinet, or nearly the entire, can be constituted.

Sir Robert Peel will apprise your Majesty from time to time of the progress which he makes in his communications with individuals.

He has reason to hope that Mr. Baring will accept the office of President of the Board of Trade, Mr. Goulburn that of Secretary of State for the Home Department, and that Sir Henry Hardinge will consent to return to Ireland as Chief Secretary. Sir Robert Peel thinks that it will be very desirable that Sir Henry Hardinge should take his seat in your Majesty's Councils as a Cabinet Minister.

Sir Robert Peel trusts that your Majesty will approve of his intention of not making known for the present the probable destination of particular appointments.

The King 'entirely approved.' He also explained why he had dismissed the Whigs.

From the King.

The King knows that it has been the opinion of some that he has acted prematurely, and that if he had agreed to the arrangement proposed by Lord Melbourne, the Administration would have fallen to pieces and dissolved itself soon after the opening of the Session. But his Majesty could not have sanctioned the nomination of Lord John Russell to the office of Chancellor of the Exchequer without bringing into question the sincerity of his declaration, that he would resist the encroachments to the prosecution of which that individual had pledged himself.

His Majesty might possibly have brought Lord Melbourne and his colleagues into greater difficulty by sub-

jecting the appointment of Lord John Russell to a declaration of his views and intentions, to which the unanimous assent of his colleagues should be attached. Or he might have made his disapprobation of the course pursued by Lord Brougham the chief ground of his objection, and have required from Lord Melbourne that he should be removed from his Councils.

But his Majesty had no desire to place Lord Melbourne in difficulty, or to embarrass him by the nature of his proceedings. He preferred to meet him on the frank and honest terms on which his Lordship had ever shown his disposition to deal with his Majesty. And he is satisfied that he has adopted on this occasion the plain and simple course which best became him, and which best entitles him to the confidence of those who have so handsomely and kindly met his recent appeal to their valuable support and services.

His Majesty did not, in taking his resolution, place out of view the possibility of an arduous struggle, nor did he commit himself without having made up his mind firmly to persevere in a course adopted on what he considers sound principle, and suggested by a deep sense of sacred and moral obligation. His Majesty trusts that, with the help of God, he shall be able steadily to pursue that course to a successful issue, without endangering the existence of the monarchy or the peace of the country.

To the Bishop of Exeter.

Dec. 22, 1834.

My main object is the interests of the Church of England. I will most willingly return to private life, and make the very very small sacrifice of office, rather than consent to anything which I conscientiously believe to be prejudicial to the great and sacred object for which the Church was established.

But my earnest advice is, that the Church should avail itself of this, possibly the last, opportunity of aiding its true friends in the course of judicious reform, to enable us

to go all the lengths we can go with perfect safety, and to make, if possible, a satisfactory and final settlement.

Let us do all that we can do consistently with our own conviction that we are making no concession hurtful to the true interests of religion.

I need hardly assure you that all mere political considerations—all views of Church preferment as being subservient to party interests—are as nothing in my mind compared with the great object of giving real stability to the Church in its spiritual character; and that I believe enlarged political interests will be best promoted by strengthening the hold of the Church of England upon the love and veneration of the community.

From Mr. Hulton.

December 16.—The old leaven is showing itself at Knowsley. Orders have been issued to the tenants to support Wood and Molyneux, the Unitarian and the Radical. This is too bad. We are inclined to acquit Lord Stanley at present, and to attribute this measure to his father. Time will show.

Since the resignation of Lord Dudley (with Huskisson) in 1828, the Conservative Foreign Secretary had been Lord Aberdeen. He would gladly have resumed that office, but unselfishly took an active part in urging the Duke of Wellington, on account of his great authority throughout Europe, to accept the post, and himself fell back on the Admiralty. This again he gave up to oblige Lord de Grey, who refused the Colonies. Lord Aberdeen did not like the Colonial Office, but undertook it, and Sir Robert Peel gave him there the help of Mr. Gladstone.

To Lord Aberdeen.

Dec. 18, 1834.

My dear Aberdeen,—Earl de Grey will accept the Admiralty. Will you tell the Duke what passed between us yesterday, and your voluntary offer to go to the Colonial Office to effect that object? Ever yours,

ROBERT PEEL.

Lord Aberdeen to the Duke of Wellington.

Argyll House : Dec. 18, 1834.

I forward Peel's note, and in explanation have only to add that, as Lord de Grey would not listen to the proposition of the Colonial Office, and as it appeared probable that the Admiralty might not be equally objectionable to him, I yesterday offered to Peel, if this should be the case, to go to the Colonies, for the purpose of effecting this arrangement.

From what has already passed, you may form some notion of the reluctance with which I have come to this resolution, but I had better say no more upon the subject. Should it prove useful to the Government, I ought to be satisfied.

To Mr. John Gladstone.

Jan. 31, 1835.

You are probably aware of the sacrifice I have made of personal feeling to public duty, in placing your son in one of the most important offices—that of representative of the Colonial Department in the House of Commons, and thus relinquishing his valuable aid in my own immediate department.

Wherever he may be placed, he is sure to distinguish himself.

Mr. Goulburn became Home Secretary, and had the appointment of the Law Officers for Scotland, and of his Under Secretary. But on both points his chief gave him counsel.

To Mr. Goulburn.

Whitehall: Dec. 19, 1834.

Enclosed are two letters from Rae. I advise you instantly to make out his appointment as Lord Advocate, and to confirm that of Mr. Alison, who is truly worthy of it. But you may always entirely confide in Sir William Rae.

Dec. 31.—I am afraid Gregson will decline. He seems to think such an appointment as his—I mean of a lawyer

capable of preparing and examining Bills for Parliament—indispensable to your comfort and satisfactory discharge of your duties. But he is afraid of the labour and responsibility, and I much fear nothing will induce him to undertake them. It is the real fear of encountering such questions as Corporation Reform, Church Reform, Tithes &c. which will induce him to decline your offer.

But for this very reason it is the more important for you to get some man in whom you can confide. I fear you will find no man at all comparable to Gregson.

Jan. 2, 1835.—If you can satisfy Gregson that the whole drudgery and responsibility for every kind of Bill will not be thrown upon him, and that he shall have every fair assistance, I think you may yet secure his invaluable services.

The Foreign Secretary had a free hand.

To the Duke of Wellington.

Dec. 22, 1834.

I quite agree with you that Lord Stuart de Rothesay's would not be a satisfactory appointment to Paris. I think Lord Strangford's would be a very bad one. I have no hesitation in saying that it appears to me, considering his prudence and experience, and above all his immediate relationship to you, that Lord Cowley's would be the best appointment that could be made.

Considering the particular position of Aberdeen, and Sir Robert Gordon's own character, I think it would be well to employ him in some important station.

I have spoken to Lord Fitzgerald on the subject of the British Peerage, and have by that communication soothed the feelings of disappointment under which (I must say without any good cause) he was evidently labouring. You will judge whether some diplomatic employment, the Hague or Brussels for example, could be proposed to him by you.

I should say generally that the pretensions of the others

you have named are from diplomatic service, and I am so confident that you are a better judge than myself of the comparative strength of such claims, and the qualifications of each individual for particular missions, that I will not say a word.

The most unfortunate choice was that of Lord Londonderry for St. Petersburg. At Vienna, he had earned the full approval of Canning. But more recently, by defending Russia in a debate on Poland, he had incurred popular resentment. His appointment therefore was sharply attacked by Liberals, and Lord Stanley also described him as the last person who ought to have been sent to Russia, to represent the feelings of the people of England.

Sir Robert Peel took full responsibility for the selection, and stood firmly by it. But later he approved Lord Londonderry's own decision to resign, rather than serve with efficiency impaired by the feeling shown in Parliament against him.

From Lord Londonderry.

(Confidential.)

March 16, 1835.

It is impossible for me not to be deeply penetrated by your high-minded and noble conduct towards me, at our last interview. But in proportion as I saw your magnanimity, so did I feel it doubly incumbent upon me to take my own line, independent of all advice, or further consultation with you or any member of the Cabinet.

You deprecated any hasty proceedings on my part. You seemed to disapprove of my pursuing my own course in the House of Lords. In both these instances, I fear I have disobeyed ; but, alas ! the pressure from without left me no breathing time, and I heard Lord John Russell's question to-day was to be followed by an immediate Address to the Throne.

Under these circumstances I could not see you, and I had barely time to write my hasty official letter to the Duke of Wellington, to tender my resignation to the King, on the ground of my efficiency to serve his Majesty at St.

Petersburg being materially impaired by the proceedings in the House of Commons.

If by this public act of mine, I have warded off one of the many shafts directed against your herculean efforts to save the country, I feel that I shall have accomplished more good than I could do to you, under actual circumstances, in the Court of Russia. And I do assure you that no time or events can obliterate from my mind your flattering appointment of me, your still more flattering defence of my public reputation, and last but not least your unshaken determination to stand by the choice you had made.

To Lord Londonderry.

March 17, 1835.

If when I saw you on Saturday I appeared to maintain an unnecessary reserve, that reserve arose solely from this circumstance, that I had firmly resolved not to abandon you, but to abide the result of any motion which might be made in the House of Commons, rather than advise the Crown to recall your appointment.

If I appeared rather to discountenance than to encourage the course you were inclined to take, it was because I had equally determined not to seek directly or indirectly any method of evading the difficulty in which we might be placed.

I do not hesitate, however, now to say that if I had been in your situation I would have pursued the course which you did, the course which I think was most conformable with your own high spirit and high sense of honour.

I must congratulate you on the result of your determination, for nothing could be more satisfactory (so far as you were concerned) than the manner in which it was received even by a hostile House of Commons.

From one old colleague, under whom in 1827 Sir Robert Peel had been willing to serve, he now sought unofficial aid.

To Lord Melville.

Christmas Day, 1834.

I have led such a life since my return to England that until this day, when other people are a little more idle, I have not had one moment to write to you.

I do not go through the vain ceremony of inviting you to return into the King's service, because I know that the appeal would be unsuccessful. I am compelled, too, after the extraordinary suspense in which the country has been kept during my journey from Rome, to act in many cases without an instant's delay, and I felt assured that the mere compliment of an offer, which we both knew would be declined, would in truth be a compliment better suited to vain and artificial public characters than to yours.

You will, I trust, require no assurance from me that nothing could have been more gratifying to me than to have had the means of resorting to your advice and co-operation during the progress of the undertaking in which I have been engaged.

How it will turn out I know not. I have the consolation of feeling that whatever could be done by me has been done zealously, and with but one single object in view.

As regards one of his own brothers (afterwards General Peel), whose father-in-law, without his knowledge, had urged his claims, Sir Robert Peel wrote :

To the Marquis of Ailsa.

Dec. 27, 1834.

Although you kindly relieve me from the necessity of an answer to your letter—indeed, express a wish that I should not answer it—I cannot pass it over in silence.

I have gone through a good deal within the last fortnight, and know pretty well how false is the estimate of the world of the opportunities and advantages of power, but no mortification I may have incurred would equal that which I should feel if I could really think you correctly understood my brother's sentiments and wishes and feelings

—if I could really believe that, because I have not placed him, at such a time as this, in a political office, he was, to use your expression, ‘pained to the core.’

I had never the least conception that my brother wished office, which would entail upon him constant residence in London and constant attendance in the House of Commons. Certainly, as you say, he might be disinclined to mention it. But my inference was drawn not from his silence, but from his general habits and general conversation, which never led me to think that he wished for the occupation of office.

I well know his high mind and his honourable pride, and I must say to you with perfect frankness that I am thoroughly convinced that if my brother knew the situation in which I have been placed—attempting to reconcile claims of past official services with the new claims that have arisen since we left office, obliged to pass over many to whom from their circumstances in life office is a real object—if he knew all this and felt assured, as I trust he does, that I had undertaken the tremendous task imposed upon me for one single purpose, and with one single view, to form for the King a stable Government—I am, I say, thoroughly convinced that my brother would be the last man in existence to add to my difficulties by desiring an office for himself, and subjecting me to the charge that I had diminished the means at my disposal of satisfying just claims, or conciliating useful support, by providing for members of my own family.

I have not the slightest objection to your showing this letter to my brother.

With a friend's brother Sir Robert Peel dealt as with his own. For judicial ability he looked beyond his party, which his party did not quite approve.

To Mr. Goulburn.

Drayton Manor : January 13, 1835.

I will say to you what I should say if my own brother were a candidate, that I think the judicial office ought

always to be filled without reference to any personal considerations whatever.

I think if a man has embarked violently in party politics, he has no right to expect promotion from the Government to which he was opposed. But with that exception, in my opinion on all occasions, but especially on the first when a new Government is called on to make a judicial appointment, that appointment ought to be made which, considering the professional character of the person to be appointed, will do the most credit to the Government.

If by his station in the profession your brother has the best professional claim, I think it would be exceedingly unjust to disregard it on account of his connection with you, but I am bound to say to you with perfect frankness that I do not think the connection ought to weigh against a higher professional claim.

I would really, my dear Goulburn, do for a brother of yours what I would do for a brother of my own, which would be to request in the case of a judicial appointment a fair consideration of the professional claim, without any reference to personal or political connections.

From Mr. Goulburn.

Whitehall; January 14, 1835.

When there are no superior qualifications evidently marking out a man for an office, it is I think impolitic to select for appointment those men who have been uniformly opposed to a Government, or only recently converted.

I may live in a peculiar society, but I can assure you that I find nothing more prejudicial to our interests than the impression which prevails that such is our course. It deadens the exertions of zealous friends, and it makes the large mass, namely those who act on interested motives, oppose us as a matter of profitable speculation. I believe that we have suffered more from making Abercromby Chief Baron than from any act of our last Administration. So much I have thought it right to say on public grounds.

At the cost of disappointing friends Sir Robert Peel had done his best to lay a broad foundation for his Government, but in vain. Lord Stanley had declined to serve, suggesting that the Administration might take its tone from Wellington, whom he regarded as a foe to progress.

To remove such apprehensions, the Prime Minister resolved to place before the country a bold policy of Conservative reform. But in his 'Tamworth manifesto' he did not go beyond the principles avowed in his first speech in the Reformed Parliament.

In both alike he treated the Reform Act as 'a final and irrevocable settlement of a great constitutional question.' In both 'he was for reforming every institution that really required reform; but gradually, dispassionately, and deliberately, that the reform might be lasting.'

And on some questions he could now point to the course he had actually taken. He had supported relief from Church rates; as regards marriage, he had declared for perfect equality of civil privilege; as regards Church property, while refusing to divert it from Church uses, he had been prepared to commute tithes, to redistribute revenues, to remove every abuse that could impair the efficiency of the Established Church.

He gave assurance, too, of strict economy. Nor did he rest in words; at once he began to act.

To Mr. Goulburn.

Whitehall: January 5, 1835.

I entreat your immediate attention to the subject of the enclosed.

(Enclosure.)

To the Duke of Wellington.

(Confidential.)

Whitehall: January 5, 1835.

We should gain so much of public good will by announcing in the King's Speech that, notwithstanding all former reductions, the estimates of the present year will be lower than any preceding estimates since 1793, that it is most important that the head of each department should commence without delay a consideration of what retrenchments

can be made, consistently with the true and permanent interest of the public service.

If a little be done in each department, the aggregate may justify such a declaration. I need not say that I would not purchase the advantage of it by any reduction that could not safely be made. At the same time I think that, if we can honestly have the advantage, it may have a very material bearing upon the stability of the Government.

I will make a similar communication in strict confidence to Aberdeen, Goulburn, Herries, Lord de Grey, Murray, and Hardinge.

From the Duke of Wellington.

Nuneham : January 5, 1835.

You may rely upon my making every reduction of expense that is practicable, at the earliest period of time. But as far as I have been able to see, some late reductions, particularly in the Consular Establishments, are injurious to the service, and cannot be carried into execution. However, every reduction of expense that is practicable shall be made.

To Mr. Hobhouse.

January 7, 1835.

If I could make the following principle as to Dissenters' marriages work practically, I believe I could reconcile to the adoption of it the reasonable men belonging to the Church and to the Dissenting body.

Retain the laws as to marriage, and the registration of marriage, as they now stand without alteration for members of the Church of England.

For all who do object, not being members of the Church, require a civil ceremony, superadded to any religious rite which the Dissenting party may choose to adopt. Encourage the religious rite, but do not make the performance of it essential to the validity of the marriage contract. Make the civil ceremony absolutely essential.

Let the civil ceremony be of the simplest kind—an acknowledgment before a magistrate by each party in the presence of witnesses, according to a form supplied by authority.

The difficulties in the way are difficulties of detail.

To the King.

(Most private.)

Whitehall Gardens : January 5, 1835.

Sir Robert Peel has put in train for consideration the various matters on which it may be advisable to make a public declaration of the intentions of your Majesty's Government upon the meeting of Parliament.

He had yesterday a very long and very satisfactory interview with the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of London, on the subject of the Church, and begs leave, with their united concurrence, to propose for your Majesty's sanction the following measure: the appointment of a Commission, whose immediate duty it shall be to review the whole state of the Church patronage at the disposal of the Crown, the Chancellor, and the Bishops, with a view of attaching spiritual duties to all preferments that are at present sinecures, and of making the preferments applicable, as far as possible, to the efficient discharge in person of ministerial functions.

From the King.

Brighton : January 10, 1835.

The King does not delay acknowledging the receipt of Sir Robert Peel's confidential communication, and assuring him how highly he approves of his having given such early attention and consideration to the important objects therein mentioned.

WILLIAM R.

Thus within a month from his return to England, Sir Robert Peel had formed his Government, framed his policy, announced it, and begun to put it into execution.

As the general election drew near, it was of interest to learn

the intentions of Lord Stanley, who, by throwing his whole weight on either side, could have done much to affect the result. Sir Robert Peel, giving him credit for genuine Liberal Conservative principles, relied on his forbearance from opposition, but did not think it wise to make further overtures to him.

From Mr. Croker.

January 8, 1835.

Lord Francis Egerton writes to me from Lancashire what I think you should see.

‘I suppose Sir Robert Peel well knows by this time that the Whigs mean to turn him out on the Address. I have reason to think, however, that they—or at least some of them—are not accurately informed of the views of Lord Stanley, or even of the nature of his communication with Sir Robert, and that as yet they have formed no clear notion or programme of the Government which they hope to erect on our *décombres*. My host, Lord Skelmersdale, thinks that Stanley’s present propensities incline him, as a matter of choice, much rather to look on than to take office. I believe this to be so, and think that he finds much greater pleasure in the cheers of the House and the congratulations of the ventilator,¹ than in the possession of official power, or the performance of any practical duties to the country.’

All this is rather in explanation of a phrase he had used in a former letter: ‘Stanley has visions of the helm.’

His father gives the most zealous support to the Radicals, and particularly to the Dissenters. This looks like Scotch policy.

To Mr. Croker.

Drayton Manor: January 10, 1835.

Your letter of the 8th finds me here. I went to bed at two on Friday morning, rose at four, travelled to Drayton, and had the cordial satisfaction of a ball in the evening, at which Lady Peel and Julia, after their journey, danced

¹ The part of the House reserved for ladies.

with a spirit worthy of their Italian fame. Next day I shot eleven wild ducks, twelve pheasants, and I know not how much besides.

I doubt whether the Whigs *can* turn me out on the Address. But I cannot tell you how little all this disquiets me. I have done my best. I will leave nothing undone to succeed.

If I do succeed, and remain in office, as I mean to make no sacrifice to popular opinion for the mere purpose of gratifying it at the expense of the real and even remote interests of the country, success will be a compensation to me for all that I must resign of private comfort and happiness.

If I fail, having nothing to reproach myself with, no man was ever installed in office with half the satisfaction to his own mere personal and private feelings with which I shall retire from it, and sit with you in the new library at Drayton Manor, after a day's shooting.

I envy not Stanley's 'visions' of my place. I would not exchange my position for his.

I should have thought that, in such a crisis as that in which we are almost unconsciously living, a man might have made up his mind as to some definite course of action; that he might have ranged himself on one side or the other; that, if he left his colleagues because they were 'destructives'—to use his own word; if he did what he could to ruin them in public estimation by the grossest and to them most unreasonable abuse; if he set the example to his Sovereign of withdrawing from them his confidence; I should have thought, having been one of the main causes of the King's embarrassment, he might, on the highest and most courageous principles, have assisted in the King's defence.

With the King his new Minister maintained important correspondence. One of his first letters defends the dismissal of Melbourne. Sir Robert Peel might think it impolitic. But he did not, with modern writers, place royal authority so low as to hold that, when the King's servants tried to force on him a new

policy, which had alienated some, and would alienate more, of their ablest colleagues, and which in his own conscience he thought wrong, it was 'unconstitutional' for him, even when his Prime Minister suggested it, to transfer his confidence to other Ministers, willing to be responsible for his action.

Whether the House of Commons, or the country, would support the new Government was another question, on which both King and Minister appear to have had good hopes at first, but not for long.

To Sir Herbert Taylor.

(Private.)

Drayton Manor : January 12, 1835.

I am not only acting in exact conformity with my own private and personal feelings of esteem and regard for you but from a conviction that it is of essential importance to the King's service, when I invite the fullest and most unreserved communication from you on any matter, however important, or however delicate.

If I differ from you, I will tell you so at once, but without feeling the less obliged to you for having suggested to me considerations, which may not occur to one like myself, so engaged in the heat of the conflict, but may well deserve serious attention.

I doubt the policy of acting on the advice of your correspondent as to Lord Stanley. I pay him the compliment of supposing that he is honestly attached to the principles which he professes, and that he will prefer the maintenance of those principles to any temporary personal advantage which he might gain by embarrassing the King's Government.

To tell you the truth, I think the course taken by Lord Stanley and his friends is in itself, if other arguments were wanting, a justification of his Majesty's policy in changing his Government.

May Lord Stanley withdraw from the King's councils from distrust of the intentions of his colleagues ; may he publicly charge them with deception and fraud ; and may not the King—after losing not only Lord Stanley and his

friends, but Lord Grey and then Lord Althorp—may not the King be at liberty to change a Government, with which the chief men who had formed a part of it refused to act, and which became paralysed by their retirement?

Whether there was not an obligation on the part of Lord Stanley to assist the King, unless some manifest impediment of public principle prevented it, is a question into which it is needless for me to enter.

As I said before, I give Lord Stanley credit for adherence to the Conservative but yet liberal principles which he has professed. I cannot believe, therefore, with my knowledge of the intentions of the King's present Ministers, that he will have any ground of public principle on which he can thwart or oppose us. But my slight knowledge of him leads me to think that we are more likely to establish a claim to his support by our public acts, without seeking confidential communication with him, than by an attempt to establish it. Such an attempt has not been encouraged, either by the course taken by Lord Stanley's immediate relatives in respect to the elections, or by the tenor of Lord Stanley's own address.

Notwithstanding all the boasts and menaces of our opponents, I feel very confident of success. Confidence will not ensure it, but despondency and dismay would certainly prevent it.

I believe the people of England will at no remote period be satisfied that I have the power to do as much in the way of real salutary reform as the sincere friends to such reform could wish—to do as much as can be done by any one, consistently with respect for the form of Government and the Constitution under which we live.

Others may outbid me, and offer to force their pretended reforms in spite of any obstacles; but I have confidence enough in reason and good sense to believe that these will prevail.

From Sir Herbert Taylor.

(*Private.*)

Brighton : January 14, 1835.

The King has ordered me to send you the enclosed summary account of the leading features of his reign, and of the general principles which have directed his Majesty's conduct, which his Majesty flatters himself you and the Duke of Wellington will find not uninteresting, nor altogether useless at this period.

The King has taken great interest in the construction of this document, has given me very precise instructions on the subject, and has considered minutely every part of it. Several alterations, additions, and omissions have been made by his express direction.

The document has since been published in the 'Life of Baron Stockmar.'

To Sir Herbert Taylor.

Whitehall : January 20, 1835.

I have read the memorandum with the utmost attention, and, I must add, the utmost satisfaction.

It is so clear and explicit in every part, that no further explanation can be requisite.

From Sir Herbert Taylor.

(*Private.*)

Brighton : January 21, 1835.

I have seldom been more gratified than by the kind expression which your letter conveys of your approbation of the memorandum, and his Majesty is very much pleased to learn that you consider it satisfactory, and to think that it may prove useful.

We are in very good spirits here with respect to our prospects, and the evidence so generally afforded of an improved feeling in the country.

To Sir Herbert Taylor.

(Most private.)

January 22, 1835.

The Duke of Cumberland called on me yesterday, and said in the course of conversation, 'I hear the King is drawing up an *exposé* of all the circumstances connected with the removal of the late Government.'

I said nothing, of course, but it is as well that you should know what the Duke said.

From Sir Herbert Taylor.

Brighton: January 23, 1835.

I am extremely obliged to you for informing me of the communication which the Duke of Cumberland made to you, which I apprehend to have no reference to anything said to him here, and still less to the memorandum the King ordered me to send to you, that not having been mentioned by his Majesty or myself to any one in this house.

The fact is that the King never tells him anything, and that for more than a year his Royal Highness has not exchanged a word with me (and I hope never will again), and has taken the same exception to those who assist me.

His Majesty had indeed ordered me to take an opportunity of cautioning you against the Duke, though he felt satisfied that you would be on your guard against him, as he often pretends to have received communications which have not been made to him.

In preparing for the Session, the more Sir Robert Peel looked into abuses in the Church, the deeper grew his conviction of the urgent need for dealing with them.

To Mr. Hobhouse.

Whitehall: January 23, 1835.

The consideration of the all-important question, the condition of the Church, and the measures necessary for the extension of its just influence, have occupied much of my attention.

I have resolved on the appointment of a Commission which shall confidentially advise the King on measures of Church reform, such as the equalisation of the duties of bishops—at least a more equal partition of those duties; the consideration of the state of cathedral revenues; and the possibility, by means of the surplus, of promoting the residence of ministers, and the efficient discharge of pastoral duties.

Will you allow me to add your name to the Commission? If you can spare time for it, I cannot tell you how much additional confidence I shall have in the success of our labours. I am convinced that upon their result—upon our so conducting our inquiries, and so regulating our advice to the Crown as to enable us to satisfy that part of the public that wishes well to the Church, and to strengthen the hold of the Church upon the affection and respect of the country—the fate of the Church may depend.

Do, if you can, join us in this great work.

To Mr. Goulburn.

Whitehall: January 29, 1835.

Do you think it possible that the statement can be true, that Trinity College, Cambridge, takes 2,000*l.* a year from a parish, and gives 24*l.* per annum as a stipend to the vicar, not enabling the parish to have two services on a Sunday?

Every post brings me statements which, if they are true, convince me that the deepest responsibility attaches to the Church for the present state of this country in regard to the progress of Dissent.

If the story of Trinity College be not exaggerated, I shall look with increased satisfaction upon measures for Church Reform.

A letter from Mr. Croker, treating Church Reform as a jettison necessary to save the ship, provoked an answer in the true spirit of a determined reformer.

From Mr. Croker.

Feb. 2, 1835.

Some of our Tories are become alarmed at the rumours of your intended speech, and particularly about Church Reform. They say :

1. That you are playing the enemy's cards for him, *qu'il n'y a que le premier pas qui coûte*, &c.

2. That the scheme of *equalisation* of livings &c. is *wrong in essence*, and that things are better as they are.

There is much truth in all this, but they forget that, with the existing representative body, there is no other *possible* way of saving either Church or State.

I feel as much as any of them can do the danger of first steps, and bad precedents from good hands. But every effort—ay, and even to throwing over the guns, and, if necessary, cutting away the masts—must be made to save the ship. This is what I am convinced of, and what I preach to the two or three who talk to me. But I think it right to put you on your guard about these probable differences amongst ourselves, though I know not how you can help them.

They tell me that the clergy have but a half confidence in the Archbishop, and *worse than none* in the Bishop of London.

To Mr. Croker.

Feb. 2, 1835.

It is a very harmless occupation for 'some of our Tories,' to keep themselves in wind by attacking wind-mills of their own creation. Who ever dreamed of 'equalisation of livings' ? I am sure I never did.

Is the Church to be a provision for men of birth or learning? or is its main object the worship of God, according to the doctrines of the Reformed faith ?

That worship is promoted by inviting men of birth, and men of learning, into the Church. But if the time shall ever arrive when it can be shown that to this object, important as it may be, you have sacrificed other and

more important objects—you have left hundreds of thousands to become Dissenters, or more likely infidels, because you would not divert one farthing of ecclesiastical revenues from this deanery or that great sinecure—if the time shall come when a strict scrutiny shall be made by unfriendly inquiries into the principle on which great preferments have been given by politicians, 'some of our Tories,' who now profess their exclusive friendship to the Church, will find their friendship the severest measure of hostility from which the Church ever suffered.

This is the old cry. 'The Bishop of London is an enemy. And the Archbishop,' it seems, 'cannot be depended on.' Very good. But if such opinions as those which 'some of our Tories' deprecate do prevail in the highest authorities of the Church, can there be a more conclusive proof that our position is an unsafe one, and that there is a demand from within as well as from without which had better be carefully considered in time?

For God's sake don't let pretended friends of the Church provoke the statement of the case which can be made out in favour of a temperate review of the present state of the Establishment.

Is this right, that in a parish of 10,000 acres overrun with Dissent, the whole tithes go to an ecclesiastical corporation, to the amount of 2,000*l.* a year; that there is only one service in the church, and cannot be two because said corporation will only allow 24*l.* a year as a stipend to the vicar?

What think you of Kingston and Richmond being united in one benefice, because King's College, Cambridge, cannot afford to endow the two out of the tithes?

In Ireland too Sir Robert Peel's tone was that of a zealous Church Reformer.

To Lord Haddington, Lord Lieutenant of Ireland.

Whitehall: January 4. 1835.

I need not say to you how absolutely necessary it is that every ecclesiastical appointment in Ireland, great

and small, should be disposed of with reference to the single object of strengthening the just—and by just I mean the spiritual—influence of the Church in Ireland, and its hold upon public opinion.

To Sir Henry Hardinge, Chief Secretary.

Jan. 12, 1835.

I send you from the Bishop of Kildare what appears to me neither more nor less than the plausible defence of a sinecure. ‘The Dean,’ it seems, ‘requires an assistant,’ and so forth.

My earnest desire to you is to disregard all such statements as the enclosed, unless you are yourself perfectly satisfied that the continuance of such an office as that referred to is indispensably necessary on its present footing. If it be not, make it in some way or other auxiliary to the efficient, and at the present time the underpaid, performance of active spiritual duties.

This is your first opportunity for a practical proof of what our intentions are as to Church Reform, and peculiar importance will be attached to it.

I am not sorry in having the means to send you thus early a specimen of the ‘solemn plausibility’ with which a sinecure can be defended in Ireland.

On December 30 writs had been issued for the general election, and, on February 10 the new Parliament met, the second under the Reform Act.

CHAPTER XI.

1835.

The Second Reformed Parliament—Attitude of the King—Support from Stanley and Graham—Lichfield House Compact—Unbending Tories—Six Defeats in Six Weeks—Resignation—Royal Bounty to Science and Literature.

IN the second Reformed Parliament, Conservatives mustered stronger than in the first. Nearly one hundred were added to their ranks. But, as against Whigs, Radicals, and Irish combined, they were outnumbered.

In attempting to re-elect the late Speaker, they sustained a first defeat. On this the King, in a letter too long to be given in full, imparted to the Cabinet his fixed intention, should the Whigs again be forced on him as Ministers, to withhold from them the Royal confidence, in his view indispensable to their existence.

From the King.

St. James's Palace : Feb. 22, 1835.

The King is too much impressed with the importance of the present crisis in the affairs of the country, and too sensible of the value of the exertions which Sir Robert Peel and his other confidential servants are making in support of his own earnest endeavours to rescue it from impending dangers and calamity, not to feel anxious to put them in possession of his feelings on the subject, more especially as they apply to his own position.

His Majesty considers that the confidence, the countenance, and the support of the Sovereign are indispensable to the existence and the maintenance of the Government, so long as the Constitution of the country is monarchical ;

and he can confidently appeal to all those whom he has called to his councils since Providence has placed him on the throne, whether he has not uniformly made this the rule of his conduct.

If unfortunately the present factious Opposition should carry their purpose to the length of refusing the supplies, and his Majesty's confidential servants should not consider it advisable to recommend to his Majesty to make a further appeal to the country, his Majesty would consider it his duty to yield to their advice, although he might have been led to believe that the result of such appeal would offer proof of a further reaction in the public feeling.

In such event, however, his Majesty would be placed under difficulties which attach more peculiarly to his own station, and as combined with it to the interests of the monarchy; and it behoves him to consider well what might be the course to which he would be reduced.

The last change of Administration was his own immediate and exclusive act. He removed Ministers whom he considered no longer capable of carrying on the business of the country with advantage, and he called to his councils others whom he considered deserving of his confidence.

The proceeding which is threatened would be a direct censure passed upon his Majesty's conduct, by a party avowing its determination to force itself upon him, and into his councils, in opposition to his declared principles and sentiments, his wishes, and his conscience.

Imperious circumstances, and the apprehension of throwing the country into confusion, may oblige his Majesty to sacrifice feeling, comfort, and rooted opinions, and to bow under the overpowering weight of this evil.

But it is impossible that he can give his confidence to men so introduced to his councils. They cannot expect it, nor can they claim a support to which their proceedings would have so little entitled them. His Majesty might be obliged to *tolerate* them, but he could not meet them cordially, nor communicate with them as with friends. They may become his Ministers, but never his *confidential*

servants. He would receive all their advice with jealousy and suspicion. He could not bring himself to affect that which he cannot feel.

WILLIAM R.

This frank avowal seems to have received no written answer. Two days later the King delivered his Speech from the Throne.

A copy of this had been offered beforehand to Stanley and Graham, but they had answered to the effect that they would be in a better position to support the Government, as they desired, if they were not made privy to its intentions.

From Sir James Graham.

(Private.)

Sunday evening: Feb. 22, 1835.

On the receipt of your note I hastened to communicate with Lord Stanley, and I now write in his presence and with his entire concurrence.

We are highly sensible of the confidence which you are willing to repose in us, and which you may rest assured is safely reposed. But in our peculiar position we think it right to return your packet unopened.

When we declined a share in your official responsibility, we told you with sincerity that we entertained the confident hope of being able to give to your Government, on the strength of the measures which we then believed and still believe you intend to introduce, an independent, and therefore more efficient, support. Subsequent events have tended to increase our anxiety thus to support you, and have by no means diminished the importance we attach to strict adherence to the line we have marked out.

But we think that, consistently with this declaration, it will be of great advantage to say with truth that we know nothing either of the Speech or of the Amendment, until we hear them in public. And, believing as we do that the King's Speech will be full and satisfactory, and resolved as we are, should that be the case, to resist any amendment of a factious nature, which if carried would justify the dissolution of your Government, our support

would lose half its value and all its frankness if it were the result of a secret knowledge of this important document.

Both Lord Stanley and I anxiously hope that you will do justice to our real motives, and give us credit for no cold caution or reserve, in return for your frank reliance on our honour.

In the spirit of this letter Lord Stanley and Sir James Graham acted loyally, but in vain. The Government were beaten again on the Address, again on a Royal Charter for the London University, again on an adjournment; and, to ensure a continuance of such defeats, O'Connell allied himself closely with 'the base, bloody, and brutal Whigs.' The so-called 'Lichfield House Compact' enabled Lord John Russell to carry a motion to go into committee on the Irish Church, and in committee a resolution to appropriate its surplus funds to secular uses, and in the House again a motion adopting the resolution. The House thus bound itself to the policy which in the winter had broken up the Cabinet of Lord Melbourne, and had caused the King's antipathy to its chief promoter, Lord John Russell.

In one of the debates a Radical having imputed to Ministers dishonourable conduct, Sir Robert Peel called him to account, and obtained an explanation, in substance perhaps not less offensive than the words complained of, but in form including the necessary disavowal of intention and a sufficient expression of regret.

To Mr. Joseph Hume.

House of Commons, Friday evening: March 20, 1835.

Sir,—In the course of the debate this evening I understood you to make use of expressions of which the purport was that I was pursuing a course in respect to the measure then under discussion that was inconsistent with the conduct of a man of honour.

Thinking it probable that such expressions fell from you inconsiderately and in the warmth of debate, I gave you the opportunity of recalling them, by an appeal to you in the House.

I could not with propriety pursue the subject further at the time, but I am confident that you will feel that the

expressions of which I complain are not consistent with the usages of Parliament, and not warranted by the freedom of debate, and that you will therefore not hesitate to disavow them as applied to me.

I have &c.

ROBERT PEEL.

From Mr. Hume.

House of Commons: March 20, 1835.

Sir,—I expressed myself in the debate, to the best of my recollection, strongly condemnatory of the conduct of the Government of which you are the head, inasmuch as you and your party had objected to and rejected the Bill of last Session for settling the tithes of Ireland, as inconsistent with the welfare of the country; and I added that I did not consider it honourable to come down as you had now done to propose a measure every way similar.

When you appealed to me in the House as to the words I had used, and whether I intended to cast imputations on your honour, my immediate answer was that I could not say what your feelings of honour were, but that I, as a political man, should not have considered it honourable conduct if I had so acted.

It is therefore quite clear in my recollection, that whilst I made my observations in allusion to what I would have done, I did not impugn your honour as a gentleman in the course you had taken, as the views you take of your political duty are doubtless as pure as my own or those of any other member, although your political conduct be the reverse of mine.

I am not aware, therefore, that you had any good grounds for understanding my expressions to impugn your honour as a gentleman. I had no intention to make any such personal charge, and I regret that in the heat of debate I should have so expressed myself as to convey a meaning I did not intend.

I remain, &c.

JOSEPH HUME.

Papers of this date show that not only did Sir Robert Peel feel keenly the humiliation of prolonging a hopeless struggle, but he had other far-sighted reasons for bringing it to a speedy close.

Paper sent in circulation to the Cabinet.

March 25, 1835.

Sir Robert Peel feels it to be his duty to call, previously to the meeting of the next Cabinet, the serious attention of his colleagues to the position of the Government in the House of Commons, and to this grave question, whether it is consistent either with the credit and character of public men or the interests of the King's service to continue the attempt to conduct a Government with a minority in the House of Commons.

Let us calmly review what has taken place. The Government has been beaten since the meeting of Parliament on the choice of a Speaker, and on the amendment to the Address I was obliged to name Mr. Bernal for the Chair of the Committee of Ways and Means, from inability to secure the election of any one in the confidence of the Government. The first diplomatic appointment which we made could not have been persisted in, and was resigned in consequence of the interference of the House of Commons by the person designated for it. We have made no progress whatever with public business, have only yet passed through three or four votes on Navy estimates in the Committee of Supply, have been obstructed every night by frivolous debates.

I am aware that it is in the power of any individual member to take this course, and to create these impediments. But the course is taken, and the impediments are created, because we are in a minority, because we have not the weight and authority to check, through the opinion and voice of a majority, the vexatious opposition of individual members.

Last night, on a question relating to the appointment of a Committee to inquire into the most frivolous accusations against an officer in command of the Marines at

Chatham, although we proposed to concede an inquiry, limited to such of the allegations as affected his official conduct, we were in a minority of 160 to 130.

On Monday next there will be a call of the House, and a proposition, to which we no doubt shall be unable to accede, will be made respecting the supposed surplus of ecclesiastical property in Ireland.

If—after the defeats to which I have above referred, after the failure to conduct satisfactorily the public business in ordinary matters through the House of Commons—if we are beaten upon that principle, in maintenance of which Lord Stanley and his friends retired from office last year, what course shall we pursue?

Shall we continue responsible for the government of Ireland, and shall we proceed with measures relating to the Church of Ireland founded on an opposite principle? What is our prospect of carrying those measures in defiance of a majority? What is our prospect, after a defeat on a great principle, of commanding larger numbers and a better attendance?

It may be said, wait till you have evidence that you cannot conduct the public business with satisfaction.

I ask in reply, what additional evidence can we have, and where is the point at which a Government is to confess its inability to conduct public affairs?

Nothing can, in my opinion, justify the Administration in persevering against a majority, but a rational and well-founded hope of acquiring additional support, and converting a minority into a majority. I see no ground for entertaining that hope. But I foresee the greatest prejudice to the cause of good government, to the character of an Administration, and of the public men who compose it, and to the prerogatives of the Crown, in a long-continued course either of acquiescing in what you believe to be wrong, for fear of being in a minority, or of exhibiting the Executive Government without control over the House of Commons, and attempting—after sufficient proof of their failure—to govern with a minority.

We have tried the result of an appeal to the people. We cannot, I think, entertain the belief that there will arise through our maintenance of office the justification of a second appeal, or the prospect of acquiring great additional strength from the result of it.

If we are beaten on Monday, I shall greatly deprecate the entrance upon a course which I foresee will lead to the following results.

We shall ensure—shall we not justify?—constant obstruction to the course of public business. The impediments will be apparently unimportant, will involve, perhaps, no great principle, but will be effectual for their purpose. It will become very difficult to determine the point at which an actual paralysis of the functions of Government will occur. The acquiescence of one night will be pleaded as a precedent for the acquiescence of the night following, and at last, without any plain intelligible ground of public principle, we shall be compelled to retire, and shall be told that, if we consented to retain office after having been in a minority on such a great principle as the integrity of Church property, we ought not to have resigned on some much smaller matter.

The Duke of Wellington was for fighting on, and wrote :

To Sir Robert Peel.

London : March 25, 1835.

I assure you that no man can feel more sensibly than I do for the painful and troublesome situation in which you are placed, and seeing how you feel it, it is most disagreeable to me to urge you to maintain your position.

Office has been an advantage in many views. It is no longer. It is a post of trouble, of difficulty, and of danger. It is one of honour only because these evils are contended against, and overcome as far as possible, by the courage, the firmness, and the ability which you have manifested in the contest.

I wish that I could relieve you at this hour. But I

have reflected upon what passed between us yesterday, and I should not be your friend if I did not advise you and entreat you not to give up till your retaining your position becomes wholly impossible.

A week more or less cannot signify much either way in any view whatever, excepting to your high character, and to the contentment of those who have supported you; and I earnestly recommend to you to bear with the evils of your position, till the conviction will be general that you cannot longer maintain it.

The Minister received advice also from the 'stern, unbending Tories.' One of these counselled him to look for aid to an independent House of Peers; another was ready, if called on, to accompany him to the scaffold.

From Lord Kenyon.

House of Lords: March 26, 1835.

Excuse me for venturing to express an opinion that you cannot be justified in quitting the King's service, unless you are absolutely prevented from carrying it on, or are exposed to suffer in your honour, which of course is not to be stained.

I would beg to urge that no resolutions nor bills passed by a factious Reformed House of Commons, and not consented to by you, can affect your honour.

It is an occurrence which an independent House of Lords could guard the country against. No such House of Lords will exist if you resign. It may be swamped or not, but independent it will no longer be, but will pass every measure, however infamous, which the House of Commons sends up.

I anxiously trust you will nail your colours to the mast, and not quit our Sailor—and now repentant—King.

From the Duke of Newcastle.

Clumber: Dec. 22, 1834.

You may remember—I frequently do—a conversation which we had on a former occasion, when the Duke of

Wellington made offers to you. As you know, I was wholly with you then, and you will not fail now to perceive of what vast consequence it was that your conduct should then have been what it was. You now stand upon ground well fitted to the occupation of a British Chief Minister, a clear and grand, though awfully conspicuous, eminence.

From thence I doubt not you will look down upon affairs with an eye tempered by all the force of reason, justice, judgment, courage, and unshaken determination.

I, in common with a vast many, have very great expectations from you. Lead us as becomes you, and rest assured that there will not be wanting grateful and patriotic hearts who will be devoted to you, and who would make any sacrifices to do you service.

The Duke of Wellington has set an example of noble and disinterested magnanimity above all praise. It must be felt by you as it is felt by all, and the result, I trust, will be such cordial union and devoted co-operation that the country will catch the spirit, and display such a feeling as shall silence and crush the horrid doctrines which usurped the place of virtue and love of country.

As far as I can judge, I should say that you have done well, and could not do otherwise than apply to Lord Stanley. He, I trust, will prove himself to be a valuable Conservative.

March 29, 1835.—I am not a Reformer at all. My satisfaction, therefore, in seeing you at the head of affairs is not pure and unmixed.

I would yield nothing to the spirit of reform, innovation, revolution, by whatever name it may be called. It is because, in my view of the case, concession leads to revolution, that I would, directly or indirectly, concede nothing.

But do I therefore wish to see you displaced? Most unquestionably not. Who do desire it? The enemies of order and good government, the friends of anarchy, spoliation, and revolution.

Let me beseech you to hold on with that admirable constancy which you have hitherto shown. The salvation of every interest of the country depends upon it.

Should this be your determination, call for the sacrifice of life itself, and you shall have it from me. Require that I shall share the scaffold with you—if it should even come to that—and depend upon it I will adhere to the condition without flinching.

Act with constancy and firmness, and God will not desert our cause.

To the Duke of Newcastle.

Whitehall: [Sunday] April 4, 1835.

I have been obliged to postpone even the briefest acknowledgment of your kind letter until this day, which, although it brings me no leisure, has at least the advantage of remission from parliamentary labours.

I thank you sincerely for your letter. Whatever course I may take, I think you will acknowledge that I have sufficiently proved that no personal considerations are likely to influence my decision in respect either to continuing or to relinquishing the struggle in which we are engaged.

The King stood firmly by his Ministers, and so did Stanley and Graham.

From the King.

Windsor Castle: March 28, 1835.

The King trusts that Sir Robert Peel will agree with him that the proceedings in the House of Commons may be considered upon the whole satisfactory and encouraging. They betray the absence of union in the combination of factions.

On the same day, later.—Sir Robert Peel's report of the proceedings in the House of Commons last night has given the deepest concern to the King, as it is impossible that his Majesty should conceal from himself the serious increase of the obstructions which are thrown in the way of his Government by unprincipled factions, and the annoying character of the difficulties with which Sir Robert Peel has to contend

in his truly patriotic and most able exertions to assist his Majesty in stemming the torrent.

The course taken by the Opposition last night would seem to offer very disagreeable evidence of their consistency and their union for mischief. But their proceedings, and the total disregard for all that is correct and honourable that distinguishes them, are well calculated to add to the conviction his Majesty had not ceased to entertain of the propriety and the necessity of the decision he came to in November last, and of the obligations which his station imposes upon him, to persevere to the utmost in his determination not to admit to his Councils men so devoid of principle, and so undeserving of confidence, as are those with whom some of his late Government are now coalescing, nor to entrust power to hands which would use it for purposes ruinous to the country and disgraceful to the Sovereign.

WILLIAM R.

From Lord Stanley.

Carlton Gardens : March 29, 1835.

Your course [in opposing absolutely Lord John Russell's motion] is just what I had expected, and, if I may be allowed to say so, I entirely concur in the propriety of it.

The alliance with O'Connell and the Radical party was formally declared at the dinner yesterday, and so far places matters on a new footing.

Graham is quite prepared also to take the high line, and to treat the question just in the sense in which you propose to deal with it. He will speak early in the debate. I will try to speak late to-morrow night. I suppose you will wind up the whole, subject to Lord John's reply.

To the King.

Whitehall : March 29, 1835.

Sir Robert Peel fears that the effect of a majority against the Government on Lord John Russell's motion of

to-morrow will be more serious, and more prejudicial to your Majesty's Government, than your Majesty anticipates.

That motion, brought forward at the present moment, before the Tithe Bill announced in your Majesty's speech has been introduced, can only be defended and supported upon the ground of want of confidence in your Majesty's advisers.

The House of Commons, if it shall assent to the resolution, will take in effect the conduct of the Bill out of the hands of Government, and will destroy all hope of being enabled to carry that Bill into law.

Your Majesty must bear in mind that this vote will follow a succession of votes adverse to the views of your Majesty's Ministers; that there is great public evil in permitting the House of Commons to exhibit itself to the country free from any control on the part of the Executive Government, and usurping, in consequence of the absence of that control, many of the functions of the Government.

This state of things might be tolerated for a time. It might be tolerated so long as there was a rational hope of converting a ministerial minority into a majority, or of making an appeal to the people with a prospect of decided success.

Sir Robert Peel feels that there is not ground for entertaining such a hope, or for believing that the position of the Government will be improved by persevering after a defeat on the question of the Irish Church.

It is said that the resolution is an abstract one, but Sir Robert Peel ventures to assure your Majesty that in the present state of Ireland, and the present position of Church property and the Tithe question, the resolution, if carried, will have important practical results.

The immediate bearing of it will be upon the Tithe Bill, and upon the collection of tithe in Ireland. That collection has been now suspended for three or four years in many parts of the South of Ireland. The attempt must be made without delay to levy it, or rather to provide a new principle by which the immediate payment of the charge for

tithe may be transferred from the occupier to the owner of the land. The amount paid by the owner must, however, be recovered from the occupier—from that occupier who has paid nothing for three or four years past.

Your Majesty too well knows the condition of Ireland not to feel how much the difficulties of effecting this, great under any circumstances, must be aggravated if the attempt has to be made against a principle sanctioned by the majority of the House of Commons.

There are many cases in which public opinion, or the opinion of the House of Lords, might counterbalance a vote of the House of Commons carried by a considerable majority. But the Tithe question in Ireland is one upon which, as opposed to such a majority, neither public opinion in England, nor that of the House of Lords, would have a material effect.

Sir Robert Peel humbly assures your Majesty that he is not influenced, in submitting these important considerations to your Majesty's serious attention, by any feeling of personal dissatisfaction or mortification at his own position in the House of Commons. He would be proud to make any sacrifice, consistent with honour, that could relieve your Majesty from embarrassment, and would be amply repaid for it by his own sense of public duty, and your Majesty's kind and gracious approbation.

The apprehension he entertains from continued perseverance in the attempt to govern by a minority is, that it will be difficult for an Administration, however composed, to recover a control over the House of Commons; that the House of Commons, having been habituated to the exercise of functions not properly belonging to them, will be unwilling to relinquish it, and that the Royal prerogative and Royal authority will inevitably suffer from continued manifestation of weakness on the part of the Executive Government.

To the same effect, just before the critical debate on Irish Tithes, Sir Robert Peel addressed his colleagues.

Memorandum.

March 29, 1835.

The attention of the Cabinet is requested to the following points.

If we are disposed to make the resolution of to-morrow night a vital question, and to argue it as such, we may do it, in my opinion, very successfully on two grounds.

First.—That the passing of the resolution is tantamount to a declaration of a want of confidence in the Government—to a refusal of permission to them even to propose to Parliament the principles upon which the Tithe question shall be settled.

Secondly.—But the other is the stronger ground. It has reference to the state of Ireland, and to the possibility of administering the government of it on a principle in respect to Church property different from that maintained by a majority of the House of Commons. Considering how that majority is composed, considering the support and confidence which the Government has out of the House of Commons, a resolution of the House that was really an abstract one, on some general principle, might be of comparative indifference.

But is any resolution in relation to Tithe or Church property in Ireland in the position in which the property now is, an abstract one—is it not practical, and fearfully practical? Of what avail would be a counter-resolution of the House of Lords on a question upon the levy of Irish Tithe? Of what avail would it be, if the Lords amended or rejected a popular Tithe Bill passed by the House of Commons? Can you settle the Tithe question, can you collect the tithe, if a majority of the House of Commons is ranged on the same side with a vast majority of tithe payers in Ireland? This is the real question for the Government, and one which we must decide without delay, for the line of argument we take must mainly depend upon it. Shall we throw upon the House of Commons, if they beat us on the general principle of Church property, the responsibility of settling the Tithe question in conformity with their own principle?

Or shall we, beaten on the principle, still undertake the responsibility of government in Ireland?

Remember that, if we undertake it, events may occur, and very shortly, which may preclude our choosing our own time for retiring; and ought we as public men to contract the responsibility, if we feel that we are weak, independently of this question—that a few days hence our resignation may be unavoidable?

To the Duke of Wellington.

April 4, 1835.

We were beaten last night on a question of adjournment by a majority of 38.

The thing was of no sort of consequence in itself, but it is another demonstration that we can neither regulate the business of the House, nor resist with success important motions.

Turn in your mind before we meet in Cabinet the following points, which people out of doors, who are clamorous for a contest with a majority of the House of Commons, do not consider.

We are giving our opponents time to mature a new Government. This Government will be formed independently of the King's consent, though, of course, it cannot assume the actual functions of Government, and the offices of Government, without that consent. But it will be formed ready for the occasion, when that occasion shall arise. The longer we protract the struggle, if that struggle shall be ultimately unavailing, the more certain will be the blow at Royal authority.

The new Government, though not in formal existence, will virtually command a majority of the House of Commons, and when it is actually installed, will have to the whole world the appearance of having been nominated by the House of Commons, having been dictated to the King, and of continuing in office independently of his will and control.

This new Government so formed, and backed by a

majority of the House of Commons, will paralyse every step we can take in negotiations with foreign countries not well disposed toward us.

What an encouragement there is to a hostile Administration in France to act on the suggestion of the party here also hostile to us, that party having superior strength in the House of Commons.

What avails us strength in the House of Lords, or strength in the City, against the evil and danger of a growing conviction on the part of France that her policy may be independent of ours, and in defiance of ours?

Consider these two things : First, the lowering of Royal authority by the gradual maturing of a new Government in previous concert with parties in the House of Commons ; secondly, the danger of some sudden act on the part of France, in consequence of our weakness.

It is not our credit that may be at stake, but the credit of the country.

Four days later, acting on these principles, Sir Robert Peel gave up the contest. On resigning office he received from the whole Conservative party a very warm address of thanks and confidence, to which he thus replied :

To Lord Francis Egerton.

April 9, 1835.

My chief encouragement to persevere to the last in the arduous contest, which has at length been brought to a close, was derived from the cordial support which I was receiving from a party acting on the highest public principles, and actuated by the purest and most independent motives.

No sacrifice of personal ease, no labour inseparable from the position in which I have been placed, could have counterbalanced the gratification which I received from the assurance you have been deputed to convey to me, that those with whom I have been acting, on a review of the course which I pursued during my short tenure of the

chief office of the Government, have signified their marked approbation of it.

The record of Sir Robert Peel's first Government may be fitly closed by letters which passed between him and persons eminent in literature or in science to whom he offered the Royal bounty, so delicately always and with such graceful recognition as to make it seem that he was asking rather than bestowing favours.

From the King.

Jan. 31, 1835.

The King has read with great satisfaction Sir Robert Peel's letter respecting the propriety and expediency of rewarding and giving encouragement to men distinguished by their literary talents and scientific attainments.

The King in accordance with these views highly approves of Sir Robert Peel's recommendation that the dignity of Baronet should be conferred on Mr. Southey and Mr. Barrow.

To Mr. Wordsworth.

Feb. 3, 1835.

I was not able, to my great regret, to promote a wish of yours lately conveyed to me through Lord Lonsdale.

But I assure you that no man recognises more fully than myself the public claims which you possess on those who are entrusted with power, claims to which I should have the greatest pride and personal satisfaction in doing justice.

I have not the honour of being known to you, but you must allow the sincerest respect for your character, and admiration of those works which will secure you lasting fame, to supply the place of personal acquaintance, and if you will tell me without reserve whether there be anything which I can do to gratify your present wishes, or relieve you from anxiety about the future, you will make your communication to one, who will have as much pleasure, if he shall be enabled to accomplish your wishes, as you can have in finding them realised.

From Mr. Wordsworth.

Rydal Mount: Feb. 9, 1835.

That at a period of such national anxiety, with so heavy a pressure of public business as you must now be under, you should have made—I cannot say found—leisure to express yourself as you have done concerning me and my writings, affords me a gratification inferior to none which, during a pretty long literary life, I have ever known. With these words, inadequate as they are to my feelings, a consciousness of the value of your time obliges me to content myself.

The best manner in which I can meet your kind request, that I should tell you without reserve whether there be anything which you could do to serve me, is to state explicitly the motives which induced me to apply for the transfer to my son of the office I have held for nearly twenty-two years.

I saw no prospect of effectually serving him but by making for his benefit this to me important sacrifice of the place which I hold.

For the duties of this office I know him, from experience, to be fit. He is a youth of sound principles, and staid opinions, modest, though of lively and agreeable manners, prudent, assiduous, very active, and methodical. The duties of an employment rather ambulatory than sedentary would suit him best. But I must check my pen, fearing that as a Prime Minister you may smile at the above as a parental eulogy. It is nevertheless a report which every competent judge in the city of Carlisle, however differing from him in politics, would readily confirm.

Allow me to say, in further explanation, that the course of my life, though strictly economical, has not allowed me to lay up more than would be necessary for the comfortable maintenance, in the event of my decease, of my widow and my daughter. Had I followed literature as a trade, the result as to pecuniary circumstances might have been very different.

Pray excuse this long letter, which precludes me from giving vent to the expression of my heartfelt satisfaction in seeing one so distinguished for every statesmanlike quality at the head of affairs.

You and your colleagues have the good wishes, I sincerely believe, of a vast majority of the educated portion of our countrymen, and of the friends to the Constitution. May the Almighty disposer of events support and guide you through the trials that await you.

To Mrs. Hemans.

Whitehall Gardens : Feb. 7, 1835.

I have this moment heard from an authority which I fear I cannot question, that you are suffering from sickness, and from embarrassed pecuniary circumstances.

The position in which I am placed as Minister of the Crown, and the claims upon me in that capacity which high literary distinction establishes, will, I trust, entitle me to make a communication which might otherwise, from a stranger to you, appear somewhat abrupt, if not indelicate.

I hear that you have a son about the age of seventeen, for whom you are anxious to provide, and I beg to assure you that if a clerkship in a respectable public department would be acceptable to you, I will place him with the greatest satisfaction in one of the first which becomes vacant.

For the relief of your own immediate wants, I beg your acceptance of the enclosed sum of 100*l*. You need have no difficulty in accepting it. It imposes no personal obligation ; it is only the fulfilment of a public duty, which I feel incumbent on me as the King's Minister, to prevent the reproach which would justly attach to me, if I could permit a lady so distinguished for literary exertions, which have aided the cause of virtue, and have conferred honour on her country and her sex, to suffer from privations which official station gives me the opportunity of relieving.

To Professor Airy.

Whitehall Gardens: Feb. 17, 1835.

You probably are aware that in a resolution voted by the House of Commons in the last Session of Parliament, an opinion was expressed that pensions on the Civil List ought not thereafter to be granted by the Crown excepting for the satisfaction of certain public claims, among which those resting on scientific or literary eminence were especially mentioned.

I trust that no such resolution would have been necessary to induce me, as Minister of the Crown, fully to recognise the justice of such claims. But I refer to the resolution as removing every impediment to a communication of the nature of that which I am about to make to you.

In acting upon the principle of the resolution so far as the claims of science are concerned, my first address is made to you. I consider you to have the first claim on the Royal favour which eminence in those high pursuits to which your life is devoted can give, and I fear that the emoluments attached to your appointment in the University of Cambridge are hardly sufficient to relieve you from anxiety as to the future on account of those in whose welfare you are deeply interested.

The state of the Civil List would enable me to advise the King to grant a pension of three hundred pounds per annum, and if the offer be acceptable to you, the pension shall be granted either to Mrs. Airy or to yourself, as you may prefer.

I beg you distinctly to understand that your acquiescence in this proposal will impose upon you no obligation, personal or political, in the slightest degree. I make it solely upon public grounds, and I ask you, by the acceptance of it, to permit the King to give some slight encouragement to science by proving, to those who may be disposed to follow your bright example, that devotion to the highest branches of mathematical and astronomical knowledge shall not necessarily involve them in constant solicitude as to the

future condition of those for whom the application of the same talents to more lucrative pursuits would have ensured an ample provision.

From Professor Airy.

Observatory, Cambridge : Feb. 18, 1835.

I trust you will believe that I am sensible of the flattering terms in which this offer is made, and deeply grateful for the considerate manner in which the principal arrangement is left to my choice, as well as for the freedom from engagement in which your offer leaves me. I most willingly accept the offer. I should prefer that the pension should be settled on Mrs. Airy.

I wish that I may have the good fortune to prove to the world that I do not accept this offer without an implied engagement on my part. I beg leave again to thank you for your attention, and to assure you that the form in which it is conveyed makes it doubly acceptable.

To Mrs. Somerville.

Whitehall Gardens : March 30, 1835.

In advising the Crown in respect to the grant of civil pensions, I have acted equally on a sense of public duty and on the impulse of my own private feelings in recognising among the first claims on the Royal favour those which are derived from eminence in science and literature.

In reviewing such claims, it is impossible that I can overlook those which you have established by the successful prosecution of studies of the highest order, both from the importance of the subjects to which they relate, and from the faculties and acquirements which they demand.

As my object is a public one, to encourage others to follow the bright example which you have set, and to prove that great scientific attainments are recognised among public claims, I prefer making a direct communication to

you to any private inquiries into your pecuniary circumstances as to my proposal through a third party.

I am enabled to advise his Majesty to grant to you a pension on the Civil List of two hundred pounds per annum, and if that provision will enable you to pursue your labours with less anxiety, either as to the present or the future, I shall only be fulfilling a public duty, and not imposing upon you the slightest obligation, by availing myself of your permission to submit such a recommendation to the King.

From Mrs. Somerville.

Royal Hospital, Chelsea : March 31, 1835.

The very gratifying manner in which you have communicated to me your kind and unsolicited intention of recommending me to his Majesty, as not undeserving of the mark of Royal favour which you propose, greatly enhances its value in my estimation, and I frankly acknowledge that it is very acceptable.

I am indeed at a loss how to express my thanks to you for conduct so liberal and so disinterested, in terms commensurate with my feelings. Of this, at least, you will do me the justice to be persuaded, that I am sensible of it, and grateful for it.

To Mr. James Hogg.

(Private and confidential.)

Whitehall : March 31, 1835.

I have been transmitting some slight marks of Royal bounty to those who are more remarkable for literary exertions and literary fame than for worldly wealth.

I am afraid from what I hear—indeed, from what I have heard, I think, from yourself—that you have not turned your intellectual labours to any great account in a pecuniary point of view. If this be the case, and if the enclosed will relieve you from one moment of embarrassment and anxiety, you may accept it without incurring the

slightest obligation to any one but to the King, from whom no one can refuse a favour.

From Mr. James Hogg.

Altriven Lake, by Selkirk : April 7, 1835.

Honoured sir, and, moreover, my esteemed friend,—Greatly was I astonished when I received yours with the liberal enclosure, wondering how it should have come into your head to think of the old shepherd in the wilderness.

As for my refusing his Majesty's bounty, you need not have had any scruples of conscience about that, for I have a particular facility in accepting of money. Yet I have made a great deal, all things considered, but some way 'the sum of *saving* knowledge,' or rather common sense, seems to have been withheld from me, for I am always poor, and always most happy. But as I have a fine family whom I dearly love, and am straining every nerve to give them a proper education, at no time of life could your remembrance of me have chanced so opportunely for real benefit, for I well know to whose kind and noble heart I am indebted for the present.

Yours most affectionately,
JAMES HOGG.

From Mr. Southey.

Keswick : April 7, 1835.

You have conferred on me a substantial benefit, sufficient to relieve me from anxiety concerning the means of subsistence whenever my strength may fail, and equal to wishes which have always been kept within due bounds. Individually, therefore, I am not less grateful to you than, as one of those who retain the old feelings of Englishmen, I must ever be on public grounds.

Were it not for the rumours, which yet I hope are untrue, that your health has suffered, I should regard the present aspects, not indeed with complacency, but without

uneasiness or alarm. While we have you to look to, I cannot doubt that this nation will be saved from Revolution, and that under Providence you will be the means of saving it. For if you now retire from power before a profligate faction, and what deserves to be called a traitorous confederacy, it cannot be long before you will be borne in again upon the springtide of public opinion. Nothing in the course of public affairs has ever appeared to me more certain than this.

CHAPTER XII.

1835-7.

Melbourne reinstated—Municipal Reform Bill—Lyndhurst's Amendments—Disapproved by Peel—Wellington and Peel—Increased Intercourse—Irish Municipal Reform—Recess Studies—Democracy French and English—Rectorship of Glasgow University—Speeches in Glasgow—Expected Resignation of Whigs—Lords and Commons—Joint Generalship—Wellington on Grey and Melbourne Administrations.

AFTER the final defeat of Sir Robert Peel on the Irish Church, in April 1835, Lord Grey declining office, Lord Melbourne, with or without the King's confidence, became again his First Minister, and Lord John Russell his adviser on Home Affairs, including those of the Irish Church. In May the House resumed work. In June the Government brought in their chief Bill, to give effect to the recommendations of a Commission appointed in 1833 for Reform of Municipal Corporations.

How best to deal with this question had been discussed by the Conservative leaders.

From Sir Henry Hardinge.

April 23, 1835.

I saw Sir James Graham yesterday. He was very anxious to have some understanding as to the extent of concession you may be inclined to make on Corporation Reform.

He observed that Lord John Russell would in all probability attempt to make his plan conform to Stanley's views, if there should be any material difference between you. He did not profess to know what Stanley's views were, but was anxious I should convey to you his desire of some previous concert.

I asked him on which side of the House he should now take his seat. He believed, in his present seat, but he had not consulted Stanley.

His conversation was very Conservative, with a conviction that the difficulties of the Melbourne Government were so great that it can hardly outlive the Session.

He said Stanley had dined with you at Lord Wilton's, and came away much pleased.

To the Duke of Wellington.

(Confidential.)

April 24, 1835.

I received yesterday the enclosed letter from Hardinge. The subject is very important, and one in respect to which I feel much more inclined to consider what it is prudent and safe to do, than to accommodate my line, for mere temporary purposes, to that of Lord Stanley and Sir James Graham.

There can be no doubt that there has been a considerable abuse of corporate funds, and that some effectual guarantee must be taken against such abuse.

I dare say the proposition of the Government will be neither more nor less than to throw the control over corporations, and of course therefore over corporate funds, into the hands of ten-pound householders.

If this be the proposition, and that the corporate offices are to be held for a year only, or some other limited period, and that there is to be a popular election on each termination of the limited trust, I cannot conceive a measure, in the present state of society and public affairs, requiring for every part of it more anxious deliberation.

{As my own conviction is that we are looking to the same objects, and feel much more interested in protecting the monarchy, and the public interests involved in its security, than in fighting a mere party battle;} my first wish, in office or out of office, will be to confer with you, and compare my opinions with yours, on any great public question; and my chief satisfaction will be that we should continue to act in entire mutual confidence and concert.

On the second reading Sir Robert Peel accepted the broad principle of the Bill, the creation of a better system of municipal government, and while moving some amendments did not oppose the reform.

Far different was its reception in the House of Peers, where Lord Lyndhurst carried proposals changing entirely the nature of the Bill.

Many of these Sir Robert Peel refused to accept, and by his advice, and Wellington's support, the Bill became law without serious alteration.

Private letters to Mr. Goulburn give Sir Robert Peel's free criticism of the Lords' amendments, in themselves, and as bearing on the political situation, especially as furnishing, if pressed, an excuse and a cry for a General Election.

To Mr. Goulburn.

Drayton Manor : [August] 1835.

The amendments go far beyond those discussed at my house. As I feel it necessary to maintain the principle which I mentioned there—namely, of adhering in substance to the course which I took in the House of Commons, I do not wish to discuss alterations in the Bill not in conformity with that course.

Independently of this consideration, which is a personal one, and one of private feeling, I cannot say that I approve of some of the amendments.

I cannot conceive that the Government will permit the right to property to be continued *in perpetuo* to the present burgesses and their descendants. I do not believe the House of Commons will pass the Bill with that amendment in it. And as for myself, I expressed an opinion against the extension of the right to property beyond vested and inchoate interests. I firmly believe that in most cases the property was intended for the general good, and that there has been much usurpation.

On what principle is a portion of the existing Council to be retained? If any, why not the whole? If the third has a life interest in office, why not the remainder? And

in what mode can this selection be made? If this proposal had been made in the House of Commons, I certainly could not have acquiesced in it.

Lord Lyndhurst's speech was one directed against the principle—a speech as effectually excluding his own amendments as the existing enactments of the Bill.

It is in vain for me, at this distance, to speculate on the course which the Government will take. Looking at their uneasy position with respect to the King, and the increased power they would have if for the third time he is driven back, as he would be, to their councils, I cannot help thinking that some of them would rejoice in an opportunity to confirm their hold on power, and settle their relations to the King, by the pretext of resignation.

I see nothing but an aggravation of evil in fruitless attempts to dispossess the Government of office. The Conservative party may make—as any party can—a Government for a recess. The Conservative party cannot govern the country with the present Parliament. But it was their Parliament, elected under their auspices, and with a full knowledge of their principles. The dissolution was a dissolution on a principle—on a fair appeal to the country on the exercise of the King's prerogative, and on conflicting principles of government.

I see no prospect of increased strength from another dissolution, no public ground for another appeal to the people, and very great reason to fear that the private fortunes of the sober and staid friends of good order and good government will be broken down by elections, which are ten times more expensive to them than to their Radical opponents.

The risk of failure is a tremendous one, for every failure is a mighty stride towards the complete destruction of all balance in the Government. There is in truth very little left, but is there a hope of readjusting it by frequent general elections?

(*Most private.*) August 23.—I never expected that the Government would advise the House of Commons to accept

the Corporation Bill as amended by the Lords. I had little doubt that Radical influence would so far predominate that, even if their inclination were to accept it, it would be overruled.

The retention of a part of the old Governing Body was alone, I think, sufficient to ensure the rejection of the Bill, and I must say, of all proposals that I ever heard of, that of retaining one fourth (or whatever the proportion is) of the old Governing Body is to me the most unaccountable.

It seems open to every possible objection. It will do nothing to conciliate even the old Governing Body as a body, for it will make the exclusion of the excluded still more marked, and more sorely felt. It shows distrust of the new Governing Body, but takes no security against their abuse of power. It will give a rallying cry to the constituent body, an incentive to them to make such a choice of new Councillors as shall be certain to overpower the select few. In short it will ensure a worse election, and take nothing in return, but a powerless minority fastened on the Council for life, by that very Act of Parliament which destroyed the principle of self-election, and yet preserved enough of it to irritate and not to control.

As I do not concur in the course taken by the Lords upon several points; as I think the speech of Lord Lyndhurst—the speech which indicated the animus and intention of those with whom he was acting—and the hearing of evidence [by the Lords] were directed against the principle, and inconsistent with the subsequent amendment of the Bill; as I think other grave matters, besides the abstract merits of this Bill, should have been maturely considered—such I mean as our strength in the House of Commons, our relation to Stanley and his friends, the course previously taken by us in the House of Commons, the policy of provoking, or at least giving a pretext for collision, at this time and on this particular question, in addition to the certain and unavoidable collision on the Irish Church question—as I think all these things should

have been maturely considered, I feel great difficulty in giving an opinion as to the course which under existing circumstances it would be most advisable to take with regard to the Bill.

If the Government advise, as I conclude they will, the rejection of the Lords' amendments, I should doubt the policy, with very inferior numbers, of insisting, to a division, on their acceptance.

I think no one will deny the perfect right of the Lords to take the course they have taken. What I apprehend is that the right on their part will be admitted, and some antagonist right contended for, and probably enforced, on the part of the House of Commons. The Government seems to have little influence against the Radicals.

Do not quote my opinion, or rather my inclination towards an opinion, about not dividing, for I feel so strongly on one or two points, the old aldermen in particular, that I give an opinion at all with some hesitation, for I should myself have great difficulty in acquiescing in that amendment.

The differences between the two Houses were adjusted in September, and the Bill became law.

1836.

Between the leader of a party in the Lords and its leader in the Commons, even at the present day, after long experience of a Reformed Parliament, it is not always easy to maintain a perfect understanding.

Since 1834 the Duke of Wellington and Sir Robert Peel had worked admirably together, but about this time again it seemed to watchful friends, and was noticed by opponents, that there was less intercourse between them.

In letters to Mr. Goulburn, urging the importance of timely consultation on the policy to be pursued in the approaching Session, there is, perhaps by accident, no mention of the leader in the Upper House, although support of that House was chiefly in question.

To Mr. Goulburn.

Drayton Manor : January 3, 1836.

I mean to come to town some days before the meeting of Parliament, for I think decisions taken on the instant before they have to be acted upon are not likely to prosper.

I still think the best subject for an amendment [to the Address] is support of the House of Lords—resistance to any attack on its constitution and privileges. That is definite. The support of Protestantism is very indefinite.

I hear absolutely nothing of Stanley, or his views. My impression is that it would not be very easy to get his cordial support to any amendment. He may probably unite with us in resistance to many things. I doubt whether he will concur in an assault, which he might think would commit him to union with the party.

His refusal to join in an amendment would be unfortunate. I do not know that it should be necessarily conclusive against one ; for if the bond of union is (as I fancy it to be) a very slight and precarious one, we need not make too great sacrifices to prevent that disruption of it which is tolerably certain to take place, do what we will to prevent it—I mean on the assumption that no effectual progress has been made towards cordial union.

The main question is this. Will the failure of an amendment on points of such vast importance as the Church for instance, or the House of Lords, injure the establishment we mean to defend ? If it will, that consideration ought to outweigh the other—not an unimportant one certainly—of the impatience of a powerful party to try their strength.

No trifling amendment would be politic, for it would incur the risk of being ridiculous. An amendment in favour of the House of Lords would be quite free from that objection.

The rejection of it by a majority, even of thirty, would, I fear, weaken the authority of the Lords.

January 6, 1836.—I am so strongly impressed with the advantage of some previous confidential communication with the most intelligent and discreet of our friends at such a time, as shall enable us to consider every point maturely, that I have resolved to try to collect some of them here about January 18. I shall write by this post to Hardinge, Lord G. Somerset, Herries, and one or two others.

Meanwhile the Duke was waiting to be consulted, and Mr. Arbuthnot, ever watchful in such matters, wrote confidentially to invoke the aid of Sir Henry Hardinge, who after consideration thought it best to show the letters frankly to Sir Robert Peel.

Mr. Arbuthnot to Sir H. Hardinge.

(Confidential.)

Woodford: January 11, 1836.

I had almost determined to write to Peel myself. Had I written, it would have been for the purpose of telling him that it has come to me, from a quarter which I cannot doubt, that Lord Melbourne and his colleagues rely almost exclusively upon a supposed want of concert and cordiality between him and the Duke.

Now in point of fact, I also know that this want of cordiality does not exist. It is very true that what passed on the Municipal Bill did for a moment put Peel and the Duke at cross purposes, and for a time there was certainly want of communication between them. But when I was at Walmer, that communication was restored, for the Duke wrote to Peel, and Peel answered his letter. The Duke wrote, because he felt that it would not be right to take steps respecting the election of an Irish peer without consulting Peel, and he wrote also because it appeared to him a good and fitting opportunity to renew a concert which had for a moment been interrupted.

I was with the Duke when he received Peel's answer. It was written just after the Duke's illness, and he was much pleased with it. Peel expressed himself kindly about the Duke's health, and I remember his saying to me:

'This is a very cordial letter. I am glad I wrote mine,

and now when consultation between us shall become necessary, it can be entered upon at once without embarrassment on either side.'

Now it appears to me that the time has come when consultation is most desirable, if not indeed quite necessary. Some little time ago the Duke, as he wrote to me, did not hear that Peel was turning in his mind what had best be done on the first day of the Session, and he also heard that Lord Abinger was suggesting amendments to the Address for both Houses. In writing this to me, the Duke said that, should he be consulted, he would readily give his opinion, but that that opinion must necessarily be guided by the grounds there might be for carrying an amendment in the House of Commons.

I have written to you very confidentially. My object was (as I hope and believe Peel thought, while I was still in public life) to see the most perfect cordiality between the two men upon whom, humanly speaking, the fate of the country depends. I know that they respect and admire each other. The Duke by writing to Peel gave proof that he sought for consultation, and therefore most glad shall I be if the Duke should be communicated with before the Session commences.

You are in the confidence of them both. You can do what my retirement renders me unfit to undertake, and I am sure you will render good service both to Peel and to the Duke, and above all to the country, if you would suggest that the measures to be adopted should be taken in concert.

In a covering letter Mr. Arbuthnot adds :

You wrote to me, and I know it from other sources, that the great reliance of the Government is upon the supposed want of cordiality between the Duke and Peel.

I have felt that you may not like to tell Peel this, and yet that you may be glad to let him know that the notion does exist, and to the great injury of the party. If, therefore, you should choose to send to Peel the letter which I

have sent to you under another cover, I could not object to it. But you would have the goodness to impress upon Peel, that it is strictly confidential, and I am sure you would not let any other person know that I had written.

The ground I take is, that the Duke did write to Peel, and that therefore Peel cannot now have reason not to write to the Duke. Between ourselves, Lord Lonsdale told the Duke that Holmes had written to him that Peel was preparing an amendment to the Address.

I have thought that if Peel should not communicate with the Duke, there will be a want of cordiality.

From Sir H. Hardinge.

January 12, 1836.

Lord Camden said that his neighbour Lord Templemore had repeated the report that you and the Duke were on bad terms.

I think it right you should know these reports, as they really have an important effect in the political world. I prefer the risk of being officious to the mischief of leaving you misinformed on this point; and as no living soul is acquainted with my communications, they can, I think, be attended by no inconvenience to you.

I therefore send you the enclosed from Arbuthnot, marked 'Confidential.' That there may be no half confidences in any matter of this kind, I send you Arbuthnot's private letter which accompanied it.

Some passing want of intercourse no doubt there had been, and some tendency to differ. But estrangement there was none, and all was speedily set right.

From the Duke of Wellington.

London : January 18, 1836.

I shall certainly be at Drayton on Wednesday, but I am afraid that I cannot stay so long as you kindly propose.

I will send Jonathan down to-morrow, and I will bring my red coat, and be prepared to do whatever you please.

In respect to business, the few words that passed between us already show that we are of the same opinion as to the course to be pursued in Parliament.

Frequent communications followed, full, frank, and cordial on both sides.

To the Duke of Wellington.

Whitehall : February 10, 1836.

I do not think anything very material has passed since you left town, except, indeed, it be the strong indications on the part of Lord Stanley and Sir James Graham of willingness to act, as far as possible, in concert with us.

I believe the Duke of Cumberland and the Orange system to be the only impediments to a good understanding.

I saw Sir James Graham yesterday at his own request. His view—and I take for granted Lord Stanley agrees with him—appears to be that a dissolution at the present moment, under the circumstances, is greatly to be deprecated, and that any attempt of the King to form another Government, which should ultimately fail, would involve the country and the monarchy in very serious danger.

He expressed a strong wish to co-operate with us in checking the evil designs of those opposed to us, and great satisfaction in the prospect of cordial concert with that view.

I had to-day a meeting here on the Irish Corporate Reform question. We had a good deal of conversation, the result of which was an impression that the best course, and that most satisfactory to the Irish Protestants, would be the abolition of all corporations without exception—the distinct avowal that the appointment of persons concerned in the nomination of juries and the administration of justice should be placed in the hands of the Crown, rather than of any local authorities.

Of course we came to no conclusion on any point. Shaw thought there would be no difficulty whatever in prevailing on the existing corporations voluntarily to

tender the surrender of their corporate privileges, on the condition that they should be extinguished for the future, and not transferred to an opposite and hostile party.

It is startling at first to hear the proposal of the abolition of the Corporation of Dublin. But it is clearly better that it should be abolished than be an instrument in the hands of an Irish faction. Why should not Dublin be governed as Birmingham, as Manchester, but above all as Westminster is at this moment, with magistrates appointed by the Crown for the administration of the law, and Police Commissioners, like those of the metropolitan police, appointing and directing the police force?

I will ascertain what Lord Stanley's sentiments are, and, until I see you, keep the whole question open.

From the Duke of Wellington.

February 11, 1836.

I quite concur in the opinion that it is not desirable that the King should make any attempt at present to change his Government. Indeed, I cannot conceive a course of events which would render it advisable for the King to originate the change. Such a measure may be forced upon him, and the difficulty must be encountered. But it is very desirable that it should be delayed as long as possible.

There is no person who feels more than I do the inconvenience of the Duke of Cumberland. I feel it every day, and all day. Others feel it only occasionally. But I can't see a remedy. His whole business is to pass the time. His amusement is mischief, preparing for it, hearing parties about each other, and talking of it afterwards. But I never could discover that he felt any real interest in any question, or entertained any serious opinion.

As long as we are engaged in measures which have for their object only to prevent the Government from doing mischief, I don't see what harm the Duke of Cumberland and those whom he affects to lead can do, excepting annoy me and the few persons who must keep him in order. If

a Government, or any other combination, were to be formed to direct a course of proceeding, in which the Duke of Cumberland should think proper to interfere, it might be necessary to cease all communication with him. But till this time comes I am convinced that, however inconvenient to me personally, it is best to bear him, and to have his support. In several instances I have separated from him in the House of Lords, and must do so again when the public service will require it.

I am inclined to think that the Radicals in the House of Commons will make a serious attack upon him and his foolish Orangeism, which is probably, however inconvenient to others, the best thing that could happen to him.

I quite concur in the view which it appears that you and your friends have taken of the Irish Corporations and the proposed reform.

It is impossible to deliver the population of the Irish corporate towns to the government of those whose conduct is described in the evidence taken before the Intimidation Committee of the House of Commons. We are trying an experiment in England and Scotland, but we have evidence sufficient to show us that we ought not to try it in Ireland. On the other hand I am afraid there is too much evidence of malversation and misgovernment to enable us to attempt to leave the Corporations as they are. The only resource is to introduce the power of the Crown.

There may be a good deal of difference of opinion, and discussion, about details. The question now is the principle, upon which I entertain no doubt. The reform ought to be founded upon the evidence which the Intimidation Committee has produced. The Corporation of Dublin should share the fate of the others.

It is most probable that you will not succeed in inducing the House of Commons to adopt this plan of reform of the Irish Corporations.

As the Duke foresaw, this policy was defeated in the Commons, by a majority of sixty-four. The Lords changed the Bill into

one for the abolition of municipal corporations in Ireland. The Commons restored it to its first form, and the Lords then laid it aside for the Session.

Part of the recess Sir Robert Peel spent in the Isle of Wight, where he found leisure to compare details of the French Revolution with some aspects of democracy in the United Kingdom.

To Mr. Goulburn.

Norris Castle, Cowes : August 22, 1836.

This is a magnificent scene. I am writing to you from a circular room with windows embracing the whole sea view from the Needles to Spithead, with trees in perfect foliage down to the water's edge, and, as it happens to-day, a hundred boats pursuing four yachts which are sailing for the King's Cup, all close under the Castle.

I can find nothing to read for mere amusement and interest half so attractive as the memoirs connected with the French Revolution. There is a whole series of them in some seventy or eighty octavo volumes lately published with great care, and with very accurate and impartial notes.

I took with me on my journey the memoirs of Bailly, and could hardly believe sometimes that I was not reading the history of more recent transactions in our own country. The recall of Necker ; the great difficulty of collecting tithes after the word 'abolition' had been once used ; the vain attempts to explain to the people that abolition of tithes meant abolition of the commutation ; the discharge of all persons convicted of an excessive love of liberty, either at the instigation of the popular Assembly, or that its interference might be anticipated ; the necessity of having democratic municipalities ; the question whether two hundred nobles ought to weigh against twenty-four millions of people ; the popular Minister of to-day scouted to-morrow as an aristocrat and enemy to liberty ; the old demagogues (the Burdetts and Hobhouses of the time) hating the new ones, and themselves denounced as traitors ; the constant lamentations that after so many popular

concessions the Minister got so little popular favour—all these things following in rapid succession made me doubt for a moment whether I was not reading the ‘Annual Register’ of 1836, instead of the ‘Mémoires de Bailly.’

September 12.—I am about to take Lady Peel for a fortnight or three weeks to St. Malo, by Jersey, and thence to the Loire. I will let you know when I return.

We ought to have made up our mind as to a definite course, when Parliament shall reassemble, on two or three great questions. One of them is the Irish Poor Laws.

I am sure the utmost caution will be requisite to prevent the transfer bodily of the whole landed property of Ireland from its present possessors to the poor, who will, under the administration of the funds by priests and demagogues, eat up whatever shall remain of the revenue, after paying the salaries of a swarm of officers, under the name of commissioners, local commissioners, relieving officers, inspectors, and so forth.

The recommendations of the Commissioners of Inquiry appear to me absurd.

One letter of this year, from a well-known pen, describes the reception in Liverpool of O’Connell.

From Mr. W. E. Gladstone.

Liverpool : January 27, 1836.

To-day has been distinguished in the annals of Liverpool by O’Connell’s public visit to the town. He addressed an immense mob in the middle of the day, and it is said that a thousand tickets, at a guinea, have been taken for his dinner.

But the circumstance which made me think it worth while to trouble you with this note is, that he ventured to visit the news room which the merchants frequent, and which was extremely full upon his entrance. Great clamour was excited by his appearance, and he attempted in vain to obtain a hearing. But as he did not seem inclined to desist, the whole affair ended by a

movement of the mass which drove him towards the door, and summarily ejected him.

The remaining letters of interest relate to Sir Robert Peel's election and reception as Lord Rector of the University of Glasgow.

From Lord Stanley.

Knowsley : Nov. 20, 1836.

Sir Daniel Sandford, in announcing to me the gratifying information that the College has elected you as my successor, entreats me to press upon you the acceptance of the office.

I feel that I am hardly warranted in complying with his request, and also that your decision has probably been made before this time. But I cannot avoid expressing the satisfaction I feel at the proof which has been afforded of the continued prevalence of the same principle in the University on which I was returned in opposition to Lord Durham, and on which you have defeated the Attorney-General.

I hope their fears of your refusal are groundless.

From Sir Archibald Alison.

Possil House, near Glasgow : Nov. 21, 1836.

Satiated as you must be with public and political honours, it is not to be expected that the inconsiderable distinction, comparatively speaking, of being elected by the Glasgow students should appear to you a sufficient reason for undertaking in the depth of winter a journey of five hundred miles.

But yet a public leader must not look for repose. The Duke of Wellington found none in the lines of Torres Vedras. And I doubt not that your penetration must have convinced you that, considered as a demonstration of the conversion of public opinion, through the efforts in which you have borne so distinguished a part, the declaration of the youth of a University in the West of Scotland is of more importance than even those which have recently been made in the English seminaries.

That Oxford should almost unanimously adhere to these opinions, embracing as it does the great majority of the rank and classical learning of the Empire, is noways surprising. That Cambridge should follow in the same path, distinguished as it is by a combination of ancient aristocracy and modern science, might reasonably have been expected. But that Glasgow College, filled with the descendants of the inveterate Whigs of Bothwell Brigg and the Ayrshire Covenanters, or the sons of the reforming merchants of Glasgow, who were so deeply imbued with democratic principles in 1832, should so soon have reverted to constitutional principles, is indeed surprising.

And even Sir Robert Peel may feel himself noways degraded by standing in a situation where Adam Smith faltered and Burke failed, which Sir Walter Scott anxiously desired, and Sir James Mackintosh was proud to occupy, and in which the impression produced by the powerful peroration of Lord Brougham is as yet undiminished by the eloquence of Lord Stanley, though destined, I doubt not, soon to be eclipsed by the more appropriate emphasis of his distinguished successor.

Whether or not it would suit your views to accept the anxious invitation of the Glasgow gentlemen for a public dinner in this city, it does not become me to say. You may wish to know possibly from one resident on the spot how such a festival is likely to succeed, and I have much pleasure in assuring you that, as nine-tenths of the property, respectability, and education in this city and the adjoining counties are strongly Conservative, and as there is little doubt not merely that at the next election a member in that interest will be returned by the county of Lanark, but ere long one also for the city of Glasgow, there is every reason to believe that the demonstration would not be exceeded by any city in the Empire out of London. And it is certainly material to foster these principles in a town increasing with such extraordinary rapidity, that in seventy years it has grown from thirty thousand inhabitants to two hundred and forty thousand.

From Sir James Graham.

Netherby: Nov. 21, 1836.

I am disposed to think that your presence in the West of Scotland at this juncture would have a salutary effect. There are symptoms of a return to better feelings in that quarter, which your influence would confirm, and the advantage gained by your election, which in Glasgow has produced a great sensation, ought not to be thrown away.

Dec. 11.—I have declined an invitation to attend the dinner, not, as you will readily believe, from any disinclination to testify my respect to you, but from a sense of my peculiar position with reference to Scotland and Glasgow.

My intimacy with the late Lord Archibald Hamilton, and my support of reform in the representation of Scotland, were my first introductions to Lanarkshire and Glasgow. Subsequent events may have proved the danger of the measures which I advocated, and the just tribute of praise may be due to you for your firmness and foresight in resisting them, at least to the extent to which they were carried. But still public opinion would be offended by my presence at a meeting where present dangers may be traced to past errors, and where I could neither acquiesce in implicit censure nor vindicate myself with propriety.

The grand object is resistance to the progress of the evil, and those who may have foreseen it early may honourably unite with those who were slow to admit it; and the extent of the danger and the urgency of the occasion constitute at once the motives and the defence of honest men.

In the West of Scotland the distinction between the old Tory party and the Conservative Reformers is much less strongly marked and maintained than in Edinburgh, and I am assured that many most respectable persons who were friendly to the Reform Bill will be found ready to meet you, and to bury the past differences in an earnest desire of making common cause against the tendency to a republic.

Herein consists the great advantage of the dinner, since obviously it must be your wish to foster these sentiments, and to add this force to the ranks of your adherents.

I received yesterday a very kind and friendly letter from Granville Somerset. He sets before me in strong terms the probability of my defeat at the next election in this county, and holds out hopes of success if I would fly from Cumberland and seek refuge in Middlesex.

It is true that a violent attack on me here is inevitable, and that the result is doubtful. But my honour is at stake. I cannot skulk, as if I were ashamed of my conduct, from the constituency of my native county. I cannot desert my friends here, and give an easy triumph to my enemies; and if I am to be turned out, defeat is more honourable than a tame surrender. Nothing can befall me which I did not anticipate when I was driven by a sense of duty to leave my party.

1837.

Sir Robert Peel's address to the Glasgow students was worthy of the occasion, of his predecessors, and of his own fame. With his political speech at the dinner, it received the tribute of being rendered into foreign tongues, and called forth echoes from south, east, and west.

From Mr. John Murray.

Albemarle Street : Jan. 16, 1837.

Dearest Sir,—I glory in your triumphant return. Pray allow me the honour, if not yet conferred, of being authorised publisher of the most original speeches that have ever been made, and greatly oblige

Your faithfully devoted friend and servant,

JOHN MURRAY.

This request was granted, and a copy of the two speeches, with shorter addresses on the same occasion, is among the papers.

From Lord Londonderry.

Petersburg: {Jan. 25, } 1837.
 {Feb. 6, }

I could not resist informing you of the very extraordinary effects your two most wonderful speeches have produced in this capital. In society nothing else is talked of, and the Emperor expressed himself yesterday to me in a manner that convinced me of the admiration he experienced in reading them.

Would to God our *soi-disant* patriots could feel for their country as these Russians seem to feel for us. I cannot but send you the translation of your dinner speech, which is given in all the Russian papers.

The Emperor's kindness has exceeded all bounds. His magnificent presents surprised me. In addition to malachite, porcelain &c. the Empress gave Lady Londonderry her portrait yesterday in splendid diamonds, a favour and distinction only four persons have received. In short, there is no end to the honours bestowed.

I have just heard, the speech of the Lord Rector is to be translated, and sent to all the Russian universities.

From Miss Edgeworth.

Edgeworthstown, Ireland: Feb. 4, 1837.

Were Sir Robert Peel Minister of State at this moment, I certainly would not write this note to him, because my motives might be misunderstood, and perhaps I might not be sure of them myself. But as it now is, and removed as I am from the great world, I see no reason why I should restrain the impulse, which urges me to tell him how much I admire the address he lately spoke to the youth of the University of Glasgow.

I am aware that it savours of vanity in me to presume on Sir Robert Peel's caring to hear my opinion. But I will run the chance of what may be thought of me on that point, for the sake of the true, honest pleasure I have in writing what I think and feel of that admirable speech of his, and of the effect it will have, not only upon the young

persons who heard it, but on the numbers of those by whom it has been and will be read, in the present age, and in ages yet unborn.

What I particularly feel, and admire, and think calculated—no, not calculated, but prompted by the good genius of the speaker—to produce great and salutary and permanent effect upon the young especially, is not even the elegance of the language, or the classical learning, or variety of knowledge, literature, and talents it displayed, but the high and pure tone of moral principle and the freshness of mind.

From Sir Robert Peel—one who has gone through political and fashionable life, which, it is too often found, wears off this freshness and lowers this tone, making men laugh at the enthusiasm of virtue and the strictness of integrity, as mere hypocrisy or folly, incapacitating them from business—such a testimony comes with the strongest force that can inspire confidence and impress eloquence upon the soul. He who said that a great orator must be a good man, to possess the full power of eloquence, has his assertion illustrated in this address. It is an oration as honourable to him who spoke it—honourable to his life and character—as it is powerful in its effect, to enlighten the hearer's mind on the real permanent sources of human happiness, to invigorate and inspire noble motives to those entering life, many of whom may bless the orator for this to their latest days.

And in his own later days, when other triumphs of politics and party and power have passed away, Sir Robert Peel will look back to this address with feelings of pure satisfaction, and with a moral certainty of the good he did by that, his best speech. It is an old woman who writes this, but one much accustomed to consider and know the effects produced on young minds. Otherwise she would not have presumed to write this note. She trusts that Sir Robert Peel will not feel it to be impertinence; he cannot think it flattery.

MARIA EDGEWORTH.

To Miss Edgeworth.

Feb. 9, 1837.

I have too many compensations for the loss of official power to make me anxious in the slightest degree to resume it, and among these is your assurance that had I been a minister I should have lost the sincere satisfaction which I have derived from your letter.

You do me little justice if you think it possible that I should be insensible to the value of your approbation of the mere literary work of a public address, or to the much higher value of your judgment as to the salutary effect of that address in a moral and religious point of view.

I am too familiar with your own beautiful productions—with the spirit in which they are conceived, and the noble end to which they are directed—to make it possible for me to form so injurious an estimate of the worth of your approbation. I thank you most sincerely for the gratification which you have given me, amid the heats and excitement of political contentions, by the frank and generous expression of it.

Across the Atlantic came an interesting comment, from which can be given only an extract.

From Mr. Everett.

Boston, United States of America : March 29, 1837.

I take the liberty to express my high satisfaction at the tone of your remarks on the institutions of this country, and to offer you one or two observations on the passages quoted by you from M. de Tocqueville's ingenious work.

I am induced to do this from the high respect for your public character produced in me by observing your political course in a pretty diligent attendance in the House of Commons several years ago, and since, by such means of observation as exist on this side of the Atlantic—a respect not impaired by difference from you in opinion on some important subjects.

I am also actuated by a deep persuasion, that even the casual expressions of persons like yourself on public occasions are calculated to exercise a serious influence over the relations of the two countries. Of the irritation which formerly subsisted between them, and which has long since happily yielded to the best understanding, not a little was owing to one or two hasty and sarcastic remarks of a distinguished statesman now no more.

In adopting any remark of M. de Tocqueville you might naturally consider yourself to be treading on safe ground, for scarcely any European writer on America has manifested a more friendly temper towards the United States. Deeming the remarks, however, which you have quoted from him to be unfounded, and likely to lead a candid reader like yourself into error, I have thought you would feel no annoyance at hearing an opinion from America on the subject, even though you should not be convinced of its accuracy.

In re-perusing the chapters from which the sentences quoted by you are taken, I think you will find a vagueness and an inconsistency which will lead you to suspect the accuracy of his observations. He presents certainly a formidable indictment of the tyranny of the majority, and the oppression under which the minority suffer, but he dwells on generalities, and gives no facts, by way of illustrating the character of this tyranny.

At the close of his reflections on this topic he cites a passage from a letter of Jefferson, written in 1789, to the effect that in the American Government the tyranny of the legislatures is more to be feared than that of the Executive. Mr. Jefferson's remark is made of our Governments in the plural, and being made before the news could have reached him at Paris that the Federal Constitution had gone into operation, unquestionably refers to the State Governments, and he probably had that of Virginia in view.

The passage which M. de Tocqueville cites from the 'Federalist,' which he ascribes to Mr. Madison, is found in a number written by Mr. Hamilton. It is intended to show

the beneficial influence of the Federal Government in restraining the otherwise absolute power of the State Governments.

Neither of these distinguished statesmen, therefore, can be quoted as authority for the existence of that legislative tyranny, under our present mixed system, the actual and oppressive operation of which M. de Tocqueville would seem to maintain.

Throughout the Session of 1837 a free exchange of information and opinion went on between the two leaders of Opposition. The letters show their generalship in manœuvring with inferior forces, their foresight, and their regard to the interests, as they conceived them, of the country.

To the Duke of Wellington.

Whitehall : Feb. 22, 1837.

Lord Stanley had an extraordinary conversation in the House of Commons with Sir John Hobhouse last night.

Sir John spoke to him with the utmost freedom about the position of the Government—said they were going out, and that he would tell Lord Stanley even the day on which they would retire; that on April 8 they would insist on resignation; but that they were determined to do all they could to prevent the success of any other Government; that they would not be defeated easily; that they should not have resented defeat by the House of Commons, but that they were resolved to bring it to the test whether the House of Lords should or should not appoint a Government against the will of a majority of the House of Commons.

All this seems very extraordinary, but you may depend upon it that the conversation, as I have reported it, passed.

From the Duke of Wellington.

Strathfieldsaye : Feb. 22, 1837.

I am very much obliged to you for the information respecting the intention of Ministers to resign.

I have suspected that they were in earnest since I heard

that these honest servants of the King, who are determined to do all they can to prevent the success of any other Government, had not taken any steps to forward his Majesty's business in Parliament.

The House of Lords will be as much surprised when informed that they are appointing a Minister, as the gentleman in the play was when told that he was talking prose. The only crime that I know of, of which the House of Lords has been guilty, is that it is an independent body.

I don't think that this information ought to make any difference in the course I intended to pursue.

On the Irish Municipal Bill, Lord Francis Egerton again moved for power to abolish Corporations, and was again defeated, by increased numbers.

On this and on other questions difference of opinion between advancing Conservatives and stand-still Ultra-Tories ran so high that only by wise concerted action and great personal authority could the leaders of the two Houses prevent the separation happening in the first year of her Majesty's reign, which ultimately took place, nine years later, after a long term of office.

In two memoranda, one dated in 1837, the other written after the final break-up of the Tory party, Sir Robert Peel records what difficulties attended the adjustment which for the time put off disruption.

Whitehall: July 4, 1837.

The enclosed papers relate to discussions which took place during the Session of 1837, as to the course to be pursued in the Lords with reference to the Irish Municipal Bill.

The position of the House of Lords in respect to that Bill will be best understood by reference to the conferences and other proceedings at the close of the Session of 1836.

We had proposed the abolition of corporations in Ireland, without reconstitution.

Some of our friends objected to this course on the ground that so ancient an institution as that of municipal corporations ought not to be abolished. Most of those who

adopted this view wished, however, to retain the existing corporations in Ireland as they stood, self-elective, and therefore virtually Protestant.

Others—among the rest Lord Stanley and Graham—thought, from the experience of the last Session, and the lukewarmness of English feeling on the Irish Corporate question, that an opposition in principle to the re-establishment of corporations in Ireland, after the extinction of the existing ones, could not be permanently maintained.

Stanley and Graham intimated to me that they could not concur in the continuance of such opposition. I myself felt that, after the course the debates in the Lords had taken in 1836, and seeing the importance attached to the question in Ireland—less from the love of corporations in the abstract than from the feeling that the denial of them to Ireland implied inferiority, and the intention to insult—it was unwise to persist in opposition to the reconstitution of them.

Above all, I was determined on this question to make the rule of my conduct in opposition the rule of my conduct in Government, that is to say, not to turn out the Government upon it—or to permit the Government to resign, in ignorance of the views of their opponents—and then to carry as an Administration that which we had contended against as an Opposition.

There were many difficulties to be encountered—the decided part the Lords had taken; the particular position of Lord Lyndhurst, who was absent in Paris at the commencement of these discussions; the disposition of a great body in the Peers to resist everything in the shape of compromise or concession.

On the other hand, there was imminent danger of disunion in the Conservative party, of separation from Stanley and Graham, and, above all, of the perseverance in a course which could not permanently be maintained by the Lords.

We came ultimately, after much discussion and many threatening appearances of open disunion, to an agreement.

Few people can judge of the difficulty there has frequently been of maintaining harmony between the various branches of the Conservative party—the great majority in the House of Lords and the minority in the House of Commons consisting of very different elements that had been in open conflict within a recent period.

It was necessary to conciliate and keep together some of the authors and chief advocates of the Reform Bill, and some of its most determined and unforgiving opponents ; so to regulate the course of debate that it should not revive the half-extinguished animosities that the years 1829 and 1830—the Catholic question and Reform—had kindled ; to conduct an Opposition on Conservative principles—almost a contradiction in terms ; for the recourse to faction, or temporary alliances with extreme opinions for the purposes of faction, is not reconcilable with *Conservative* Opposition.

ROBERT PEEL.

The correspondence referred to is as follows :

To the Duke of Wellington.

Feb. 23, 1837.

We were beaten last night by a majority of eighty.

This partly arose from the apathy and idleness of our own friends, some actually leaving town yesterday morning without a pair, others not taking the trouble to come up to London. This is one of the causes that our efficient strength in the field is much less than our numbers would indicate.

Some of our friends are urging upon me the policy of our taking up the Irish Church question. They feel that the Municipal question is comparatively an unpopular one ; that this is the reason for the Government putting it so prominently forward. And they argue that we should attempt to defeat the advantage thus gained by the Government by drawing public attention to that measure, which is purposely kept out of view.

But there are considerations which do not occur to the

eager politicians who press for interference by us in the Church question.

First, We, being out of office, are under no special obligation to attempt a settlement of the Church question; and, being in a minority in the House of Commons, we cannot settle it as we please.

Secondly, Suppose the Government to be inclined to make a fair adjustment of the Tithe question—to abandon, for instance, the appropriation clause—is it wise in us to run the risk of forcing them, by a voluntary movement on our part, to adhere to their former course, and repeat their former pledges?

Thirdly, Is it wise in us voluntarily to undertake the declaration at this moment of any principle in respect to Church property in Ireland? It seems to me that we are in a different position when we resist a deduction from tithe, made by the Government, as exorbitant, from that in which we place ourselves when we gratuitously make a concession which, being in a minority, we cannot limit according to our own views.

Fourthly, Is there not a considerable portion of the Church in Ireland, particularly in the North, better contented with the present position of affairs than with any substitute we can offer with a prospect of success? And do we not, by moving in the business, incur considerable risk of provoking opposition and discontent among those whose situation would not be improved?

From the Duke of Wellington.

Feb. 24, 1837.

The division is certainly not very promising. The absence of the Irish members particularly is to be attributed to their fear of offending certain of their constituents. They knew that the vote was to be against the amendment, and they did not care, or thought that it did not signify, whether the minority was stronger or weaker.

I quite concur with you about taking up the Irish

Church question. I think that we have done as much as we ought upon that question; more possibly than in ordinary times we should have approved of.

We are not such an Opposition as the Whigs were, or would be, if out of office. What we propose to do when out of office we must carry into execution when in power.

No proposition regarding Church property or any of the established institutions of the country ought to be brought forward excepting by the Government. Others may amend the propositions made by the Government. But we, whose object it is to protect the institutions of the country, ought not to originate motions for their amendment.

Such a proposition would obviously be a manœuvre easily counteracted or defeated, when discovered, as it would be. The Ministers would only have to delay the discussion on your Church proposition, and to accelerate the stages of the Irish Municipal Bill, and they would succeed in making it the motive for their resignation.

On the question whether he should face another defeat in the House of Commons, Sir Robert Peel consulted the Duke, who was inclined for fighting on.

To the Duke of Wellington.

March 22, 1837.

Shall we divide on the third reading of the Irish Municipal Bill?

Like almost every other political question, there are considerations on each side, which should be maturely weighed.

I think there cannot be a doubt that the Government will resign upon the loss or postponement of this measure in the Lords. It assumes, therefore, on that account, a more than ordinary importance.

In favour of a division it may be urged that we appear to be underrating the question, to be taking a weaker ground than we have heretofore taken, to be leaving the

House of Lords to bear the brunt of the decisive contest, if we forbear from dividing. It would be difficult even to get up a debate against the measure unless we were to divide, and it is not quite certain that we can prevent a division; for, on the Speaker declaring the Ayes to have it, some friend of the measure may declare the Noes to have it, for the express purpose of defeating our policy, and marking the inferiority of our numbers.

These are all very strong reasons for a division, and a division would be, in my opinion, the most creditable and consistent course, and the one the most in conformity with my own private feelings.

Now for the considerations on the other side.

The minority of twenty-three only on the Church Rates has made a great impression on all (or at least on all who have spoken to me) of our friends in the House of Commons, who were most anxious for a division on the third reading of the Irish Bill.

On the Irish question I do not suppose that it would be possible to reduce our minority below seventy, and some apprehend that we shall not exhibit greater relative strength than we did on the second reading.

I shall keep in hand the full power of dividing, and if you, and others whom you may confer with in the Lords, shall think the Lords will be best supported by division, whatever be our probable numbers, that consideration will be decisive with me.

I have said to our friends who are most opposed to a division, that we ought to have the fullest attendance possible, and that they must allow those in the Commons in whom they have confidence, after looking at the question in all its bearings, finally to decide whether there shall or shall not be a division.

From the Duke of Wellington.

March 23, 1837.

A debate and a division in the House of Commons would certainly give us strength and facility in the House

of Lords. I am afraid that unless you should determine to divide you would not have an efficient debate.

We have some waverers in opinion in the House of Lords upon this subject, even among the leaders. Their opinion will be strengthened, and any course of dissent from the majority which they may propose to follow will be encouraged by the House of Commons abstaining from a debate and division upon the third reading.

There can be no doubt whatever that the opinion of the great majority of the House of Lords is in favour of the proceeding of last Session, and of the amendment proposed this year by Lord Francis Egerton.

But this question must not be viewed solely in its relation to the House of Lords. I feel the force of all the reasoning in your letter upon the effect which will be produced in the House of Commons by this proposed division.

Ought we not to look a little further than the mere effect of a division in the House of Commons upon either House of Parliament?

Is not the probable resignation of the Government the great question of the day? It is obvious that they are surrounded by difficulties, abroad and at home, in colonies, and everywhere. They cannot find a road out of them. They will seize the first opportunity of running away, and will found their resignation upon any question upon which popular opinion may be unfavourable to their successors, and on which there may be a difference of opinion among the Conservative party.

Their resignation is a great misfortune. But I cannot doubt that it will take place. How does the expectation of this event affect the question under consideration?

It is very desirable that the public should understand clearly what the difference of opinion between the two parties is—that you are determined to uphold the Protestant religion, the Church of England in Ireland as well as in England; that you are determined to maintain the independence of a House of Lords.

I think that a debate upon the third reading might

bring out these points very forcibly, and that men might be induced to look a little further than the mere question of the municipal administration of towns which are bankrupt in property.

I shall be satisfied with whatever course you may decide upon. I may have a little more or less facility by your adopting one or the other; but, in the consideration of the great interests involved in the decision, such trifles must be laid out of the question.

March 24.—My view of our position, and of the course to be pursued in the House of Commons on the Irish Corporation Bill, does not differ from yours. I beg that you will decide ultimately without reference to my difficulties in the House of Lords, arising from differences of opinion, wavering, &c.

Nothing can be more dishonest than the conduct of the Government. They do Lord Grey great injustice in comparing it with his. Having forced themselves into the King's service, they have availed themselves of the power, which their several offices and their position as a Government have placed in their hands, to throw public affairs into confusion. They have so conducted the ordinary financial business in Parliament, called the King's business, as to render it impossible for the King to arrange a Government, if these dishonest servants should quarrel with him upon the course pursued by either House of Parliament, or by his Majesty himself.

Lord Grey may have been very harsh with the King—may have got a promise from the King to create peers to carry the Reform Bill, and that Bill may at last have been carried by the consent of myself and others to stay away, in order to save the King from the necessity of performing his promise. But there was no previous combination or conspiracy to bring about the state of affairs, which was to place the King at his mercy.

Sir Robert Peel did divide against the third reading of the Bill, and succeeded in reducing the majority for it from eighty to fifty-five.

In the Upper House, Lord Lyndhurst wished to 'dispose of' the Bill on the second reading, but Sir Robert Peel induced the Duke to overrule him.

To the Duke of Wellington.

Drayton Manor: March 28, 1837.

Your letter of March 23 showed so much consideration towards our position, and so much readiness to reconcile our friends in the Lords to any course we might deem it advisable to adopt, that I thought it of importance that Stanley and Graham should see it. It appears to me that it would not be advisable for the Lords to take a different course with respect to the Irish Bill from that taken last year—by rejecting the Bill on the second reading.

It appears to me also, that whatever course we take in opposition to the Bill, we must be prepared steadily to abide by it, if the result of that course should be to displace the Government—that we must look forward to our own position with respect to this measure, if we should have no alternative but to take the Government ourselves. If we oppose the measure now, we must oppose it then, prepared for resignation if we cannot maintain our ground. If any circumstances be foreseen under which our opposition would be withdrawn or modified, we ought, I think, while in opposition to declare fully and explicitly what those circumstances are, and the extent to which we are willing to proceed, thus leaving it to the Government to determine whether they will or will not, after full notice of our own views and intentions, consent to carry on the Government.

I do not think that we shall differ as to the general principle on which we should consider this matter.

April 9.—I return to you the letter from Lord Lyndhurst. There is one point to which it is absolutely necessary that I should advert.

Lord Lyndhurst says that the subject—meaning, I suppose, the line to be taken by the Lords—was well considered at a meeting with Sir Robert Peel early in the Session, when the course to be pursued in the Commons

was determined. And again he observes that the disposal of the Bill by the Lords on the second reading, it was then thought, would be the necessary consequence of the line taken by the Commons.

Now I must distinctly say that I never heard any consideration given at the commencement of the Session to the question what line the Lords should take on the second reading of the Irish Bill, nor was I present at any meeting at which it was deemed that the rejection of the Bill by the Lords on the second reading would be a necessary consequence of the line taken by the Commons.

I should have thought any such consideration at that time quite premature.

If we feel that we cannot permanently maintain unqualified resistance to the principle of new municipal institutions in Ireland; if any state of things could arise in which they might, with certain limitations and concessions, be established there; is it not reasonable and prudent to take the present opportunity of showing a disposition to consider that question?

There probably never will be a better opportunity. The King has told the House of Lords that they will have before them three measures relating to Ireland—the Corporation Bill, the Tithe Bill, and the Poor Law Bill.

The Tithe Bill has hitherto contained a principle (in the appropriation clause) of vital interest to the Establishment. The new Bill, in my opinion, still retains that principle.

The Poor Law Bill offers, first, a *bona-fide* rating of value, as the basis of contribution to the poor rate; secondly, the means of establishing a qualification by requiring payment of rates, as in England, in addition to other qualifications of residence, value, &c.

The Lords propose to take a connected view of the whole of these questions, and not to amend the Corporation Bill—that is, in truth, not to state what new political privileges, capable of a bad use, they will grant—until they see what is proposed in respect to the Church, and until

they have the power of rejecting from the Tithe Bill, as a preliminary to the establishment of new Corporations, anything which they may deem injurious to the Established Church.

If again the House of Commons is about to rate property for a poor law, and to impose poor rates, surely that alone would be a good reason for postponing the details of a Municipal Bill, of which the rateable value of property in towns, and the actual payment of poor and other rates, were important features.

It may be called 'manœuvring' to delay the Ministerial Bill, but has it not a tendency to defeat the 'manœuvre' of the Government, by which the Lords would be invited either to reject the Bill absolutely—and thus commit themselves to permanent conflict with the House of Commons on a question of civil privilege for Ireland which exists in England and Scotland—or to make a settlement of the Municipal Bill separately from the Tithe Bill, and to part with a main instrument in their possession for ensuring a satisfactory settlement of the Tithe Bill?

The delay may lead to no useful practical result. But does it not place the Lords in a better position than if they rejected the Bill, or merely made the same amendments which were made last year?

I think it should be distinctly understood that we are not pledged to the grant of Municipal Corporations, in any form or extent, unless the Tithe question be settled on a satisfactory basis.

Without speaking of compromise or preliminary concessions, we still may contend that, before new popular assemblies are created, which may be perverted to the purposes of political agitation, a question vitally affecting the Church, which has been unsettled by proceedings in Parliament, and which is the cause of excitement and agitation in Ireland, ought to be previously settled by Parliament.

Acting on this advice, the Duke of Wellington supported the second reading of the Bill, but put off the Committee on it to

June 9, when the illness of the King prevented for the time any further progress of the measure.

Another brief note referring to the same correspondence appears to have been written at a later date, after the disruption on the Corn Laws.

Endorsement.

These papers relate to the discussions which took place in 1837 on the Irish Municipal Corporation Bill, and to the part which I took in preventing a disruption of the Conservative party on that occasion.

It was not an easy task—considering the diversity of views on many important subjects which prevailed both among the leading men of both parties and among their followers—to bring about a practical concurrence in a common course of action.

On reflecting on all that passed, I am much more surprised that the union was so long maintained than that it was ultimately severed.

R. P.

CHAPTER XIII.

1837-38.

Accession of Queen Victoria—Whigs in Favour—General Election—Defeat of Sir James Graham—Tamworth, Insult and Apology—The King of Hanover—Canada—Whigs attacked by Radicals.

IN June 1837 the death of King William and the accession of her Majesty Queen Victoria changed the relations of political parties with the Crown.

The King had felt, and had not concealed, extreme distrust of the Whig Ministers imposed on him against his will.

The youthful Queen, brought up in Liberal principles, was well inclined to give her confidence to the genial and devoted Melbourne, and to accept from him all necessary instruction in her Royal duties.

The General Election then required by a new reign did not much disturb the balance in the House of Commons. The best known statesman who lost his seat (for Cumberland) was one who had changed sides. In a letter announcing his defeat he appears inclined to prefer his new chief's judgment to his own.

From Sir James Graham.

I am beaten by a considerable majority. It would be insincere to deny that this triumph to my enemies, and this rejection by my native county, are painful circumstances. But before I left Lord Grey's Government, and severed my connection with a party which no longer commanded my confidence and respect, I counted the full cost of the sacrifice which I made, and nothing has befallen me which I did not foresee, and which other and better men than I am have not gladly encountered in their country's cause.

I cheerfully pay the forfeit, and I retire into private life with a mind tranquil and full of hope that I may be considered, by those whose opinion I value, as having faithfully discharged my duty in difficult circumstances, and as worthy of some portion of their esteem.

In my retirement I shall constantly remember the generous kindness which you have shown to me on every occasion, and, if you will allow me the expression, I trust we shall always continue friends. I do not believe there now exists between us one shade of difference of opinion on public matters, and my confidence in you is such, founded on personal regard and respect, that my inclination will be strong to prefer your judgment to my own.

The scenes of popular violence and intimidation both in this county and in the adjoining one of Roxburgh have been disgusting and brutal beyond description. On the day of nomination a hearing was denied to me, and as I retired from the hustings a rush was made on me, with savage yells and the most murderous intents. My son was knocked down by my side, and escaped with difficulty, and my opponents—using the Queen's name as their war cry, and supported by Lord Morpeth, one of the Queen's Ministers—declare against any Pension List, and avow their intention of supporting Ballot, Triennial Parliaments, Household Suffrage, the Reform of the House of Lords, the Expulsion of the Bishops, and the Repeal of the Malt Tax, to be covered by the abandonment of the British colonies, and by a large reduction of the army and navy estimates.

In Roxburghshire, Lord Minto, a Cabinet Minister, was present at Hawick during the poll, where the mob seized eleven of Mr. Scott's voters, stripped them of their clothes, threw them into the river, and compelled three to run for shelter through the town in open day without a rag to cover them, in the presence of women and an assembled multitude. Surely these outrages fatally resemble the fiendish temper of the French Revolution. Yet the Ministers of an infant Queen do not hesitate to ally themselves with

this rabble, and to prostitute in such a confederacy the Royal name of their innocent victim.

Sir Robert Peel was returned for Tamworth, with a Conservative colleague. Some weeks later he became aware that the defeated candidate, Captain Townshend, R.N. (afterwards Marquis Townshend), as reported, had imputed to him 'violations of honour, of principle, and of truth,' and had declared it 'impossible, after what had passed, that the word of Sir Robert Peel should be taken anywhere again.'

On reading this, Sir Robert Peel at once obtained the assistance of Sir Henry Hardinge, who called on the offender to name a friend. Captain Townshend named Mr. Alston, and Sir Robert Peel, with precautions to ensure secrecy, sent to London for his pistols. But Mr. Alston, after conference with his principal, and with Sir Henry Hardinge, wrote :

I feel that Captain Townshend is bound to offer the most satisfactory apology, by fully retracting the offensive words, which he must now feel were founded on erroneous impressions; to which he must add his regret that he should have given cause of offence to Sir Robert Peel. As the friend of Captain Townshend, I now (through you) offer to Sir Robert Peel the apology and regret of Captain Townshend.

Sir Henry Hardinge replied :

I accept, on the part of Sir Robert Peel, the apology offered by you on behalf of Captain Townshend as a satisfactory reparation for the offensive language used, and declare the affair from this moment to be entirely terminated.

From Sir Henry Hardinge.

Walmer : Sept. 27, 1837.

Daly told me that he had seen Mr. Alston, who asked him if you were satisfied with his conduct. 'Of course you were,' was the reply.

He observed he had only one course—to make an

ample apology, that Captain Townshend had written expressing himself perfectly satisfied, and that he would, if necessary, have gone even farther in making his apology complete. Alston added that, if the parties had gone out, he would not have allowed Captain Townshend to fire.

A private friend, one of the few who had been aware of what was pending, describes Sir Robert Peel's bearing at the time.

Archdeacon Singleton to Sir Henry Hardinge.

I have read with great interest and ultimate satisfaction the correspondence between Mr. Alston and yourself. Your letters are characterised by the good sense and precision of expression which never forsake you, and by a frankness which belongs only to him who has the better cause.

I do sincerely thank God for the pacific termination of this affair. After having had the happiness of seeing Sir Robert Peel in the singular felicity of his domestic life, after witnessing the regularity of his morals and his quiet piety, the mere possibility that he should have put all to hazard upon the garrulous malice of a madman, or the foolish obstinacy of one whom the offender might have selected as his friend, is most sad and appalling.

I know all that can be said of the necessity of these explanations. It is difficult to say how the affairs of the world can be ordered without them. But it is, you will admit, quite grievous to think of the chances to which even the best of men may be exposed by others, or obliged, as in this case, to expose themselves.

So long as I live I shall never forget the calm composure of Sir Robert as we drew towards home after our walk. He was placid, and even cheerful, but recurred continually to the stillness of the evening and the quiet beauties of the scene, as if his heart were filled with a peculiar tenderness for his home and household. I repeat it, I thank God that he is safe from actual or menaced fight.

In the autumn Sir Robert Peel went abroad with Lady Peel and his daughter. At Paris they visited the King, and a letter is preserved from the unfortunate Duke of Orleans, desiring to call upon them.

From the Duke of Orleans.

La Duchesse d'Orléans et moi, Monsieur, étions souffrants hier au soir, et n'avons pu nous rendre chez le Roi, où j'apprends que j'aurais eu le plaisir de vous rencontrer. Mais je désire trop vivement pouvoir réparer ce contretemps pendant votre court séjour à Paris, pour ne pas vous demander si dans la matinée de ce matin je n'aurais pas chance de vous trouver chez vous, où je serais charmé de vous renouveler l'assurance des sentiments avec lesquels je suis

Votre affectionné

FERDINAND PHILIPPE D'ORLÉANS.

At Stuttgart the King of Hanover sent his Minister to seek advice from Sir Robert Peel, who replied with much caution. He writes to the Duke of Wellington:

Whitehall: Nov. 13, 1837.

We got as far as Munich, where I was charged by the King of Bavaria to send you his kind regards.

On arriving late one night at Stuttgart, I was called on by the Baron de Strahlenheim, the Envoy of the King of Hanover to the King of Wurtemberg and to the Diet.

He brought the enclosed note from the King of Hanover, and spent two hours in trying to convince me that he could give me such information about Hanoverian politics in the course of the evening as should enable me to give an opinion as to the course which the King of Hanover ought to pursue, and also to undertake the defence of it in the House of Commons here. I declined to undertake either one or other of these functions, and he then told me the course was actually decided upon, and that the States of 1819 were to be revived.

As he said he was to report his conversation with me to the King, I thought it advisable to write to his Majesty, and accordingly addressed to him the letter of which I enclose a copy.

I saw Louis Philippe in Paris, and the Duke of Orleans, and had a conversation of an hour with each of them. They were well satisfied with the elections.

From the King of Hanover.

Hanover: Oct. 24, 1837.

Having received despatches from my Minister resident at the Diet of Frankfort, informing me you had arrived there, I have directed him to call upon you, and inform you of all that has been going on here, being most anxious that you, as the head of the Conservative party, should be thoroughly acquainted with the true state of affairs here, as well as the laws and the rights of the country.

I am certain, from your personal knowledge of myself, that you never would have given credit to all the foul calumnies and aspersions published against me.¹

I have desired Baron de Strahlenheim to wait upon you, and *confidentially* to make you master of the whole subject.

I trust and hope that, when you have heard all, and received every information necessary, you will see I have acted with prudence and coolness.

To the King of Hanover.

Stuttgart: Oct. 28, 1837.

Baron de Strahlenheim called upon me, and delivered to me the note which your Majesty has done me the honour of addressing to me. He also entered into explanations respecting the constitutional questions now pending in the kingdom of Hanover, and expressed a wish to have my opinion upon them.

¹ These attacks related chiefly to designs ascribed to the King (the Duke of Cumberland) against Constitutional Government in Hanover.

I stated to him that it would be great presumption in me to offer an opinion upon matters of such grave importance, involving many considerations of constitutional law and also of public policy, without a much more extended and intimate acquaintance than that which I possess, or could form from conversation, with the laws and usages of the country, with its interests, and with the state of public feeling and opinion; that I could therefore only give my general impression, which was strongly in favour of a moderate and conciliatory course of policy, in reference to constitutional privileges once actually conceded, and having been practically exercised; that I thought the position at issue could not prudently be viewed with reference merely to Hanoverian interests; that regard must be had to public feeling in other European states, and the bearing of any measure that might be adopted upon the politics of such of those states as had forms of government analogous to that of Hanover; above all, in the particular relation of your Majesty to the throne of England, that it was of great importance to weigh maturely the impression likely to be made upon the people of that country.

1838.

Of this year the most interesting letters relate to the revolt in Canada, and discuss the line to be taken by the Conservative party.

Sir Robert Peel, the Duke of Wellington, and Lord Stanley all shrank from voting with Radicals, or with Lord Brougham. But to join on this occasion in defeating a Radical attack would be to support the Government in a policy which Conservatives in general had not approved (see pages 363, 367).

Sir Robert Peel's own view of what should have been done, and of what should now be done, was definite and set forth in detail.

From Lord Stanley.

Knowsley: Jan. 1, 1838.

I have doubts whether it will be politic to make any great exertions to bring up our friends, sorely against their

will. Of course this will depend on the course to be taken. But though the Government have by the whole course of their conduct with regard to Canada laid themselves open to very heavy charges, yet I do not suppose that you would desire to move a direct vote of censure on their conduct, and if not, we shall probably divide, if there be any division, in support of their proceedings to put down the rebellion.

I must say, however, that my firm conviction is, that if they had acted with ordinary decision, and not encouraged the malcontents by their vacillating conduct for the last three years, we should have had no outbreak at all. And I think also that there is matter for serious reprehension in their having either been blind to the actual condition of affairs, or, knowing what it is, having taken no steps for communicating with Parliament, and strengthening the force in Canada before the commencement of a Canadian winter.

But all this may be stated in debate, and does not necessarily imply any adverse motion. If you are to have a real attack, of course you will need your whole force; but if not, many of our friends will be glad of a respite.

I should be very glad to know your views, and whether you think our friends ought to be pressed up. I shall be in town on the 15th, but very much *contre cœur*, as I find good cover shooting full as amusing as the House of Commons.

To the Duke of Wellington.

Drayton Manor: Jan. 7, 1838.

I enclose a letter which I had the other day from Stanley.

I apprehend there can be no doubt that we ought to give a cordial support to any measures which the Government may propose for the suppression of revolt in Canada, provided they are likely to be effectual for the purpose.

If they bring forward measures just sufficient to preserve themselves from the responsibility of the immediate loss of Canada, but leaving the materials for future explosion, it

appears to me that we ought to protest against such a course, and decline any active approval of it. But I do not think we are called upon to suggest any counter scheme of coercion. None but those who are in the Government can do this with effect.

In answering Stanley, I said to him that I should have advised an immediate meeting of Parliament on receiving [in December] the first intelligence of open revolt; and—for the purpose of encouraging the friends of British connection in the North American Provinces, and of leading public opinion here—an address to the Crown from both Houses, assuring the Crown of cordial support in suppressing at any hazard insurrection in any part of the dominions of the Crown; that I did not understand the object of [Parliament] meeting on the 16th; that I thought it would be premature to discuss the future settlement on a permanent basis of the Canadian question; that I had had no opportunity of conferring with you and others upon this matter, but the inclination of my own mind was to advise that every effort should be made to suppress the present revolt, and—even supposing it possible that in the attempt we should be involved in war with the United States—still to persevere, out of regard for the honour of England, and for her immense colonial empire, which must be shaken to the foundation if a revolt entered into on such frivolous pretences should be successful; that our position with regard to Ireland was an additional motive for taking a decided course; that I thought, presuming the insurrection to be effectually put down, a new question of immense importance, involving the whole of our relations not merely to Lower Canada but to both the Canadas and our North American provinces generally, would then present itself; that I thought it utterly impossible in any event to permit the Act of 1791 to remain in force unaltered; that if the great body of British settlers in the North American Provinces—if the intelligence and respectability of those Provinces, and the population, were in favour of connection with England as colonial dependencies, we had no option

but to maintain it; that it would be dishonour to us to abandon them, but I thought we had a right to require that such measures should be taken as would give the friends of British connection a predominance in the local governments; that to have in the heart and centre of the Provinces a popular assembly representing hostile feelings, commanding the St. Lawrence, and thus paralysing Upper Canada, thwarting us in every measure essential to the good government of Canada itself, and ready at any moment of serious difficulty to try separation, when separation would be dishonourable to England—was intolerable; that the Act of 1791 ought therefore to be suspended, provision made for the intermediate administration of Canada by the authority of the Crown, and time thus taken for calmly reviewing our position with regard to both the Canadas, and Newfoundland, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and the whole of our North American Provinces, and for considering by what system of government we should best secure to them a good administration of their local affairs, and best protect them and ourselves from the risk and charge of defending the Provinces, in the event of war, either with France or with the United States.

In short, I thought we had a fair right to demand, in return for the continued maintenance of our connection, that we should not have an eternal struggle with a hostile democracy while we were at peace, and the serious obligation, in the event of war, of defending those Provinces at all hazards, not so much from their own intrinsic value and importance to England, as from the sense of dishonour, if we permit them to be taken from us by force.

I shall be very glad to have the opportunity of talking over this most important concern, before we meet in London, and are involved in the discussion of it.

When Parliament met, the Government announced their policy—to suspend the Constitution of Lower Canada, and to send out, clothed with large executive, deliberative, and legislative powers, Lord Durham.

Against this policy Radicals protested. Conservatives too condemned it, on other grounds. Their leaders still observed great caution, making it a chief object to escape from acting with the Radicals.

To the Duke of Wellington.

House of Commons : Feb. 12, 1838.

Sir William Molesworth, the Radical member for Leeds, has just given notice of a motion for an address to the Crown, praying for the removal of Lord Glenelg, on account, I presume, of his conduct in respect of Canada.

I thought something of this kind would probably take place. Three or four days since Mr. Hume came across the House, and told Sir Edward Knatchbull that he thought of giving such a notice, and would do so if assured of support from our side.

When Sir Edward Knatchbull mentioned this to me, I told him that I should be no party beforehand to any such motion.

To this letter the Duke replied :

I quite concur in your view of acting in concert with Hume, or any Radical.

From Lord Stanley.

Knowsley : Feb. 14, 1838.

To-day's papers bring us down a notice of a move of the Radicals which may, I think, be very embarrassing to us, and the effect of which must be well considered. I refer, of course, to Molesworth's notice. The subject is one upon which absence (never an unobjectionable course) could hardly be justified. Yet it seems to me that you will be placed in the dilemma of either following in the wake of the extreme Radical party, by voting a censure, on grounds different from those on which it is moved, and perhaps not carrying with you the whole strength of your party, or else of voting apparently in support of a Minister whose conduct you certainly cannot consider judicious, and

in opposition to a large body of your own friends. For I feel persuaded that all your influence would not be sufficient to prevent a very large number voting with Molesworth and in condemnation of Lord Glenelg.

I shall be most anxious to hear what are your present impressions as to the line which it may be wise, or necessary, to take.

To the Duke of Wellington.

Whitehall: Feb. 15, 1838.

Enclosed is a letter which I received this morning from Stanley. He takes a view of the notice given by Sir William Molesworth very much in conformity with that in which it appeared to me.

I am sure our true policy is to say as little as possible with respect to it at present. I will not commit myself in the slightest degree, until I have had the opportunity of talking it over with you.

In the meantime I discourage, as far as I can, not only concert but all sort of communication with the Radicals upon the subject.

The proceedings of last night were very important, and very unsatisfactory—two hundred votes for the ballot, the Government only able to command sixty-five votes against it.

Lord Francis Egerton to Mr. Arbuthnot.

London: Feb. 17, 1838.

You will have heard of our *commencement de la fin*, in the shape of the division on the ballot. It is a fatal one, and I see nothing but a coalition with the remnant of the sounder Whigs that can delay the consummation.

I had some talk with the Duke, and collected from him a determined reluctance to take advantage of Molesworth's motion. Peel's opinion has not transpired. The case seems to be pregnant with difficulties, and the only thing I have made up my own mind to is to work on Peel's view, whatever it may be. I should think this an obligation if I

were in the category of taking the consequences in the shape of office. As I am not, the obligation is doubled.

I think Peel will wait for the arrival of Graham and Stanley before he suffers an opinion to escape him.

I find even the Howicks are seriously alarmed at the fact of the fifty-six followers of the Government, and Lady Howick denies that Howick ever tampered with the question, as we know he did.

The division has made a deep impression on all thinking men, the more so that J. Russell spoke [against ballot] with energy and sincerity, and was groaned at accordingly by his own people.

From Lord Stanley.

(*Private.*)

Knowsley : Feb. 17, 1838.

I should not have troubled you again so soon, but for an extraordinary letter which I received yesterday from Brougham, with whom I have had no communication further than occasionally meeting since I left office, and who writes ostensibly to send me his last speech on Canada. He then goes on thus :

‘ I am in wonderment at the extreme self-denial of your Conservatives. I thought I had opened the door of the closet for them, and put the Government in a fire that would destroy them, when the Duke steps forward and shuts the door in his own face, and protects them from my battery. I must say he was their only defender, and that he has never helped them since. But a Government has ninety-nine lives if its adversaries help it as soon as it is in peril. *Ergo*, we have no Government at all ! ’

After this come inquiries after me &c., and then just at the end of his letter he comes to what I apprehend is the real meaning.

‘ I am going to bring on Slavery and Slave Trade on Monday. Only think of the Government having, without intending or knowing it, made a new branch of slave-trading ! Minto and Co. will be beaten on Monday, unless the Tories disgrace themselves again.’

Now I take all this to be a feeler to ascertain how far he may count on Conservative support, if he finds a good subject of attack upon the Government, and especially on the Colonial Office; and it is, of course, in concert with Molesworth, and with an eye to his motion.

I thought, however, it was well you should know this, and it may be useful to the Duke. Of course, in my answer I have been most guarded.

I do not like the vote of last night more than you do. With a Conservative Government, when there could be no motive to stay away, the ballot would be very nearly, if not quite, carried, and I can conceive nothing more fatal than its adoption.

The Government by their course, with the exception of John Campbell's speech, have put in another claim to Graham's epithet of 'shabby.'

Feb. 19.—I have read and re-read your letter of the 17th, and considered the various courses suggested as possible.

First, the shabby one is out of the question. I agree with you also in the whole of your reasoning against the second course—that of supporting the motion. There is a third course, which you do not name even in your 'process of exhaustion'—that of joining the Government in opposing the motion, and which, indeed, may be fairly said to be out of the question.

If, then, we can neither support, nor negative, nor stay away, it is clear we have only the alternative of moving an amendment, and such an amendment as will unite the votes of the whole Conservative party. This, I am convinced, a motion of the previous question would not do. On the contrary, it would create in them a difference of opinion, in which I am strongly inclined to think the majority would be much dissatisfied with the course taken.

I come to the same conclusion with you, that an amendment, which in substance must be opposed by the Government, is the only course left to us. I come to that conclusion with great reluctance, because I am convinced

that the course of cautious abstinence which we have hitherto pursued is the best for the country and the best for our views ; that a premature attack, even if successful, cannot be expected to lay the foundation of a stable Administration, and if unsuccessful gives strength and confidence to a ministry, where all is now weakness and mutual jealousy.

If let alone, and only checked in doing mischief, the discordant materials on the Government side of the House must fall to pieces, and if broken by their own internal discord many would join a Conservative Government, who would from a point of honour, or from interest, cling to an Administration temporarily displaced by a hostile motion.

But if we are forced into action, we must take up the strongest position we can find, and look out for the weakest point of the enemy's lines. Now with this view I suggest for your consideration whether a motion of general want of confidence, or one condemning the conduct of the Government on the Canadian question, affords the better ground to fight upon. My present impression leans rather to the narrower view.

It is in the first place more akin to the subject-matter of the original motion. Add to this that an attack on all parts of the line at once is sure to be feebly sustained in some, and from the confusing of the debate less impression is made than would be by bringing our whole might to bear on one, and that a weakish point.

Besides, *entre nous*, I deprecate an Irish row, and so surely as a general debate on want of confidence arose, so certainly would our hot-brained Irish friends flourish their shillelaghs over their heads, rush into the fight, and not only get their own heads broken, but contribute to break those of their friends.

I incline, therefore, at present to the opinion that the amendment should not be general, but limited to the subject of Canada, and should be to the effect of expressing the opinion of the House that the late unfortunate outbreak in the Canadas was in a great measure attributable

to the hesitating and inconsistent policy pursued by her Majesty's Government. I do not, of course, adhere to the words, but I think the policy should be characterised by some such epithets, in which Molesworth and the Radical party could hardly help joining us.

This amendment would open all the early negotiations of Rice with Roebuck, after the decided manifestations of the determinations of the Canadian leaders before the Committee of 1834, the futile and inept Commission of Gosford and Co., the failure of his schemes by the publication of his real instructions, the half-and-half resolutions of last year, the absence of troops—all tending to impress the leaders of the revolt with the idea of the weakness and insincerity of the Government's resistance to their demands, especially when coupled with the memorable declaration of Lord John Russell, and quoted from Mr. Fox, as to the necessity of giving to a majority all they demand, and if that do not satisfy them, giving them still more and more. These points and many others, well pressed home, would, I think, be more effective than a loose, rambling, ill-sustained fire, which would be the sure consequence of a general debate.

From the Duke of Wellington.

London: Feb. 22, 1838.

I concur in opinion with Lord Stanley that you may be forced to a vote upon Sir W. Molesworth's resolution, whatever may be the course that you may take.

If that resolution should be carried, the Administration must go, and you will have to consider whether you will or not undertake the Government.

I think that you should take such a course as will convince not only the House of Commons, but the public, the opposite party, the Queen, and her Ministers, not only that you did not create the crisis, but that you had done everything in your power to prevent it, and that we are not responsible for its consequences.

What that course should be, I cannot say. I don't know enough of the House of Commons to be able to form an opinion.

I am certain that the greatest evil that can befall the country is to have the Conservative party forced upon the Queen at the present moment. We may rely upon it that it will be said, however without truth, that our course has been as bad as that of Lichfield House in 1835; and I am afraid that, do what you may, your Conservative Government, however Liberal, will not be supported by any adherents of Lord Melbourne.

Then, observe how we shall stand. We have a rebellion in Canada, which must occupy our whole force for the next two years—or more, if the United States should think proper to avail themselves of that opportunity of settling boundaries, Texas, Mexico, &c.—leaving not troops in sufficient numbers for the peace establishment anywhere.

Suppose that O'Connell should, as he has threatened, avail himself of that opportunity to agitate Repeal! What does he mean by agitating Repeal? Not repeal of the 40th George III. He means to agitate non-payment of rents, as he has agitated non-payment of tithe, and to force others to repeal the law. Have we the means of enforcing good order in Ireland? Would Parliament grant us the means, or enable us to use them?

These are the obvious questions of the day. There are hundreds of others, which a Conservative Government could not even look at.

Would it be fair to force ourselves upon the Queen and the country under these circumstances?

I don't doubt that all this has occurred to yourself. I write it, however, that you may let others know what I feel.

A political party, however composed, must look before it, must consider the consequences of the steps about to be taken, and must make it certain that even the first will not be ruinous. I confess that I do not see my way in any part of this proposed course.

To the Duke of Wellington.

(*Private.*)

Whitehall : Feb. 23, 1838.

I am greatly obliged to you for writing unreservedly on the most important matter to which the letters I sent you refer.

I entirely agree in every observation that you make, and consider it a great misfortune that we should be placed in a situation in which we incur any risk of being compelled to depart from the line of policy to which we have hitherto adhered, and which I believed to be the great source of our strength.

I am sure you will give at the same time their due weight to the following considerations :

That it is of great public importance to the country to keep together the Conservative party ;

That a powerful minority acting in concert is an immense check upon Radicalism, and a Government half of which are Radicals ;

That it is a great encouragement to those of the Government who are not Radicals, and a great support to the House of Lords in its resistance to that which is dangerous and unjust ;

That disunion upon a great political question affecting the existence of a Government, to which the importance of a call of the House has been attached, is not likely to be limited to the disunion of the night, but to have a permanent effect upon the mutual confidence of the sections into which the party may be divided, and upon the compactness of the whole.

Our course, therefore, is not free from difficulties, do what we will. I propose to see privately the chief and particularly the more reasonable men in the House of Commons, to ascertain their feelings and opinions, to commit myself at present to nothing, and to keep myself perfectly disengaged until I shall have the opportunity of fully conferring again with you.

Feb. 26.—Lord Granville Somerset thinks that a very large proportion of the party will vote for Sir W. Molesworth's motion, unless something decisive can be offered to them, originating with us, in lieu of it. I much fear that many have committed themselves to this extent, and that the utmost care will be requisite to prevent disunion in the party.

However, notwithstanding all the complaints of my silence, I will remain silent till the last moment. The only real embarrassment that arises from it is the excuse it gives to people to commit themselves.

I am much disposed to have a meeting of twenty or thirty persons on Saturday next for the purpose of hearing the opinions of the leading men who usually take a part in debates. I would afterwards have a meeting of the whole party, and try to persuade them to agree generally to what might be proposed.

I shall thus be enabled to see you again before the first meeting.

From the Duke of Wellington.

Strathfieldsaye: Feb. 27, 1838.

I am sorry to hear Lord Granville's opinion. I think it not unlikely that there will be some ill temper, if gentlemen should not be satisfied with the course taken. But I don't think it will have any permanent effect.

You are quite right not to communicate with them before the time. They gossip a good deal, but they don't pledge themselves. When they find that the leaders all agree upon a reasonable course to be pursued, and that upon a fair review of others each of them is attended by such risk as to be impracticable, they will become reasonable.

There may be some exceptions. There are some who look to the possession of the Government for a day—in short, to any change. But I think that we shall find the majority reasonable. I know that many of the peers are worse than the members of the House of Commons—some,

indeed, of great authority, and closely allied with ourselves. Lord Mansfield went so far as to suggest the motion which Sir W. Molesworth is about to make. However, I don't doubt but that, when the time shall come for me to talk to them, I shall find them reasonable.

To the Duke of Wellington.

Feb. 27 (?), 1838.

I very much fear that our difficulties in respect to Sir W. Molesworth's motion are only increased by the occurrences of the last two nights.

The Government has been in a minority in four out of five divisions. In the last, with respect to the Marines, Goulburn tried to support them, for they were right, but out of eighty-six Conservatives present, eighty voted against the Government, and against Goulburn. I was not present.

If you can without inconvenience return to-morrow night, and enable me to see you, with Aberdeen, Goulburn, and one or two that we can thoroughly trust, I shall be very glad of it.

The previous question and motions of that nature have been very much damaged of late. Besides, in our case, as we certainly should not carry the previous question, we should not escape the difficulty of a division on Molesworth's motion.

In the end it was agreed, on Molesworth's resolution being put, to move as an amendment a direct vote of want of confidence in the Canadian policy of the Government, but so framed as to repel Radical support. Thus by a small majority the Government escaped formal censure.

In a letter of this year Sir Robert Peel insists upon the paramount importance, under the new Constitution, of the Register of parliamentary electors.

To Mr. Arbuthnot.

Drayton Manor : Nov. 8, 1838.

The Reform Bill has made a change in the position of parties, and in the practical working of public affairs, which the author of it did not anticipate.

There is a perfectly new element of political power—namely, the registration of voters, a more powerful one than either the Sovereign or the House of Commons.

That party is the strongest in point of fact which has the existing registration in its favour. It is a dormant instrument, but a most powerful one, in its tacit and preventive operation.

What a check it is at this moment upon the efficiency and influence of the existing Government, backed as it is by all the favour and private goodwill of the Crown, and by a small majority of the House of Commons. It meets them every day, and at every hour. Of what use is the prerogative of dissolution to the Crown, with an unfavourable registry, and the fact of its being unfavourable known to all the world? The menace of dissolution is only laughed at.

Then it is almost impossible to make any promotion, or vacate any office, for fear of sustaining a defeat.

The registration will govern the disposal of offices, and determine the policy of party attacks; and the power of this new element will go on increasing, as its secret strength becomes better known, and is more fully developed. We shall soon have, I have no doubt, a regular systematic organisation of it. Where this is to end I know not, but substantial power will be in the Registry Courts, and there the contest will be determined.

Some of the latest letters of the year relate chiefly to personal questions.

From Sir Henry Hardinge.

Carlton : Dec. 6, 1838.

War to the knife between Melbourne and Durham! He will have some following, and probably sufficient to

embarrass the Government in the House of Commons, if not to force them to resign.

I was glad of an excuse for not dining at Croker's with Brougham. He is as a public character so unprincipled that I suspect we should have been gazetted as a clique about to coalesce with him; and as I felt very anxious, while he was at Dover, that the Duke should steer clear of him, I thought the safest course was to do the same.

From Mr. Arbuthnot.

Woodford : Dec. 8, 1838.

I am very glad that Hardinge acted so wisely in not meeting Lord Brougham. Nothing could be more injurious than any sort of connection with that man. I know that more than once last Session the Duke of Wellington would not vote with him, though he thought him right.

To Mr. Arbuthnot.

Drayton Manor : Dec. 9, 1838.

Whatever Whigs or Whig supporters may say with respect to the misconduct of Lord Durham, and his liability to impeachment, it seems to me that our best course at present is absolute silence upon the subject. Of course, I do not mean the forbearing from such communications as pass between you and me, and those in whom we may have entire confidence. I speak only of more public demonstrations, or declarations of opinion.

The quarrel is between Lord Durham and those who employed him. The Government would, I think, greatly rejoice at our taking out of their hands the vindication of the Queen's authority insulted by him.

It is clear, I think, that Lord Durham has put himself, or is ready to put himself, at the head of such Radicals as do not belong to the Government. Sir William Molesworth would not have said what he has said, without Lord Durham's privity. We shall therefore have 'agitation' for triennial parliaments, household suffrage, and the ballot.

Depend upon it, the Government will make ballot an open question, and Lord John Russell will either sneak out of his declared opinions against ballot, or be deserted by three-fourths of the official men.

What will be the bearing of this on the Government it is difficult to say.

Everything is in such a state of perplexity and confusion, that I am only the more confirmed in my impression, that our true policy is to keep our own counsel, until the very moment that it is necessary for us to act, and not to decide until we have everything before us that might influence our decision.

I well know you quite agree to all this. At the same time it is, of course, very important to know what are the impressions of such men as those with whom you have had the opportunity of talking, and I am very much obliged to you for your two letters.

I did send the last to Stanley, but said nothing to him of any opinion I had formed respecting Lord Durham, or at least of the course to be pursued with respect to him.

Stanley observes :

‘I cannot conceive how Durham can vindicate his conduct, either while in Canada or in leaving it as he did, his resignation unaccepted, and a rebellion known to be organised and on the point of breaking out.’

This must be the impression of nine out of ten of those who have had any experience in public affairs, whatever be their political bias or connections.

Mr. Arbuthnot replies :

On the character and conduct of Lord Durham you and the Duke agree entirely, and almost to the very words.

A packet labelled ‘Correspondence with Mr. Henry Bayly, Dublin,’ contains a curious instance of Sir Robert Peel’s kindness to ‘a distressed literary gentleman.’

Having declined to subscribe to a forthcoming work by Mr. Bayly, Sir Robert received a note reminding him that he had

omitted to send half a guinea for a former publication. This note having remained a while unanswered, the irate author poured forth a torrent of invective worthy of a countryman of O'Connell.

Bad as my opinion has always been (he writes) of human nature, I could scarcely conceive it possible that the seventh wealthiest man in England could in his own breast justify an act which the lowest Irish weaver or cobbler would blush to perpetrate.

You form a miserable living monument of that despicable and damnable hard-heartedness which so frequently characterises the possessors of enormous wealth. With great talents of the head, but without one virtue of the heart, unmerciful, ungenerous, cold, and cruel, your misanthropic soul constitutes within you a moral Siberia.

You are selfish, avaricious, mean, rotten, contemptible, and despicable. I have only to add that notwithstanding the disparity of fortune between us, you may rely upon my having every other qualification which constitutes a gentleman, and I will satisfy you on that point, in case you should deem it prudent to demand any satisfaction for the sentiments I most emphatically wish conveyed to you in this letter.

Knowing what Irishmen are, Sir Robert Peel replied quietly.

I was not enabled to find the volume which you transmitted to me in the year 1835, until on returning to my residence in Staffordshire I found it had been sent there.

My impression had been that you intended it for my acceptance. Your last letter leaves me no option but that of returning to you the volume in question.

The inscription on the front page will account for the impression which I entertained that it was meant as a gift, and that I could scarcely have been justified in remitting to the author 'the price of the volume and the cost of its carriage to London.' A reference to the terms of this inscription is perhaps the best answer I can give to the

scurrilous and abusive language which you have thought yourself justified in addressing to one who, being, as you observe, a total stranger to you, gave you no other cause of offence than that he declined (with perfect civility, I believe) to subscribe to an intended publication of yours, and was under an erroneous impression that a volume 'presented as a most sincere token of respect' was intended by the author as a gift.

'A soft answer turneth away wrath.' 'I am constrained to acknowledge,' Mr. Bayly answers, 'that the gentlemanly and mild tone pervading your letter induces me now to express my deep regret that in my late communication I was betrayed into language disrespectful and offensive to one whom I had always hitherto looked upon with every sentiment of esteem and admiration.'

'I merely meant to have asked for the loan of about one guinea, which I would have repaid you, with gratitude, by sending eight copies of the intended work.'

Sir Robert Peel's sense of humour and his good nature seem to have found this audacious compound of apology and appeal irresistible, and he replied :

Your letter effaces the recollection of any offensive expressions you may have used in a moment of irritation, and fully disposes me, in your own language, 'to make every humane allowance, as a Christian, for the distracted mind and feelings of a victim of misfortune.'

I am sincerely sorry for your distress, and if the enclosed [cheque for 5*l.*] will at all alleviate it, I shall not regret what has passed.

The letters seem to have been preserved as a specimen of Irish human nature.

CHAPTER XIV.

1839.

Weakness of the Whigs—Prudence of the Conservative Leaders—Corn Laws and Canada—Radical Reform and Lord John Russell—Lords and Commons on Irish Crime—Wellington on his Followers—Jamaica—The Whigs attempt to suspend the Constitution, fail, and resign—Peel begins to form a Cabinet—Bedchamber Question.

FROM April 1835, when the Whigs, by Radical and Irish aid, returned to office in spite of the King's avowed reluctance to accept their services, not four years had passed when, notwithstanding two considerable accessions of support—from the alliance with O'Connell and from the favour of the Queen—their weakness became manifest to all men.

The question for Sir Robert Peel was not how to overthrow them, but how, without a sacrifice of principles, to prop them up, until Conservatives should become strong enough to govern the country again, without depending on forbearance, not to be expected, from their combined opponents.

The rank and file of the Tory party were growing eager to be led into action, but their far-sighted generals restrained their ardour, and observed great caution, especially in avoiding any communication with Radicals.

To Mr. Arbuthnot.

Belvoir Castle: Jan. 7, 1839.

I meant to return home to-day, but Royalty has laid its commands upon us to remain here until to-morrow. We are much flattered, and much inconvenienced, by the injunction.

The Duke of Cumberland is enjoying himself like a boy; was lucky enough to be in at the death of a fox, and fell into a bog in his eagerness to get the brush, for which he seemed to think there would be a general scramble, and that he should lose his chance if he were not in the middle of the hounds. He had the brush mounted, and carried it after dinner, tickling the ladies' faces with it, with accompanying remarks which bordered upon freedom. He has made himself numerous friends, however, in this part of the world, by his high spirits, and kind inquiries into the family concerns of everybody (from the huntsman downwards) whom he met at the ball.

I shall have some people with me—Ellenborough, and I hope Aberdeen—on the 14th. I shall hear what they have to say, and say nothing decisive myself.

I shall then, previously to expressing, or even to forming decidedly and irrevocably, any opinion, write to the Duke, and suggest what appear to me the material points for our consideration in reference to Canadian affairs, and perhaps other matters of immediate pressing interest, at the opening of this Session. We can then compare our opinions, and I shall have very little fear that we can get the principal people connected with us to agree.

Jan. 18.—When I was at Belvoir, Croker received a letter from Brougham which nothing but very intimate terms could have indited. Yesterday's post brought one to Lord Ellenborough from the same pen. I had no wish even to get into the very slight contact with Brougham which the mere reading of his letter (as I take it for granted it was on Canadian affairs) might bring me into. I expressed, therefore, no wish to see or hear it.

I foresee embarrassment from these unreserved communications.

The Duke of Wellington was against taking office, and still more averse from having anything to do with Brougham.

From Mr. Arbuthnot.

Woodford : Jan. 19, 1839.

I wish before you write to the Duke that you should see what he has written to me. He had said in a previous letter that we ought not to take the Government, even if we had a majority.

I asked him whether the same legitimate majority which drove the present Ministers out would not be sufficient to keep us in. I send you his answer, that you may see what his opinions are.

There are two or three points on which he invariably dwells. One is, that the popular cry is against us. The other is, that since the Reform Bill the country cannot be governed.

There never was a wiser question than the Duke's to Lord Grey : How is the country to be governed ? But I must own that I have often regretted that the question was ever put. The Duke cannot get it out of his mind, and, as Lord Grey could give no answer to it, the Duke considers it as an admitted axiom, which no circumstance can ever shake.

As to the popular cry being against us, as the Duke says, it may be so, but I have been led to believe the contrary. If the popular cry were so much against us, would not the Ministers have gained instead of losing at the last general election ? And would they, as we see is the case, be always afraid of vacating a seat in the House of Commons ? But I don't live much in the world, or mix in general society, and I may be wrong.

I wrote to the Duke that he would hear from you before you met in London. This, I think, was the occasion of his giving opinions to me, in which, unmodified as they were, I could not concur. I know that he had people of his own family with him of extreme opinions. Such men do great harm, and particularly with him. Without ever looking to consequences, they talk wildly and loosely of turning the

Government out. They provoke him, and this leads him to give extreme contrary opinions. He is ever ready to enter into calm discussion, but he cannot easily control himself when people talk to him what seems absurd nonsense.

I had written to him that Croker was on terms of great intimacy with Brougham. On this he said: 'We shall find Croker a dangerous customer. If we don't take care, we shall have Brougham in all our counsels.'

The main point with the Duke will be to steer clear, as much as possible, of being brought into the same vote with Brougham. I fear that the desire of running counter to Brougham would lead him to support the Government.

To Mr. Arbuthnot.

Drayton Manor : Jan. 24, 1839.

I return the Duke's letter, which of course I have shown to no one but Aberdeen. As I have cordially approved of the course we have hitherto taken, and as the letter maintains the principles by which that course has been guided, I cannot but express my agreement with the Duke.

I refused last year, whatever might be the words of any resolution moved by the Radicals about Canada, to hold the slightest concert with them, or anybody coquetting with them, or enter into any sort of engagement, or give any opinion for their guidance.

I have lately been pressed to authorise some of our friends to hint vaguely at the prospect of an amendment to the Address, in order to procure a larger attendance than might perhaps be had without the hopes of a division. I have positively refused to sanction anything of the kind — that is, any vague expectation of an amendment — for such an object as that of persuading a few idle men to come to town earlier than they otherwise would do.

The only qualification I would make in adopting every word of the Duke's letter is this—we must take care to

keep our party together. And I say this exclusively with reference to public objects.

It is important that the Conservative party should be a powerful check upon the evil intentions and the ready compliances of the Government and its supporters. And, though we may feel unable to form a stable Government, and may abjure all factious combinations, or mere cunning party devices, for the purpose of putting the Government in a minority, and bringing on the embarrassments of their resignation from such a course—still we must, I think, steadily maintain all the important principles and interests committed to us, and take the consequences of the steady maintenance of them. Any other course would soon lead to the dissolution of the party.

We must take care not to annihilate our influence by shrinking from strenuous opposition to the Government, where we feel it to be justifiable and necessary,

I send you a letter from Graham, which if you like you may send to the Duke. You will see that his views are very gloomy, and that he is as little inclined as any man to advise mere party combinations, or party proceedings of any kind, for the purpose of expelling the Government and seizing office.

About the same time Mr. Arbuthnot forwards information from a lady, unnamed, in the Whig camp. She says :

I hear the Government are very uneasy. Lord Holland told Pozzo the day before yesterday that they were nearly as tottering as the French Government. Pozzo answered, 'Oh non, le parti Tory n'est pas assez fort pour vous chasser.' Lord Holland replied, 'C'est vrai, mais beaucoup de nos propres amis nous tracassent, et nous font beaucoup de mal.'

She goes on to say :

The Greek Minister here, who is a man of great cleverness and understanding, and very gentlemanlike and agreeable, is going away. He went a few days ago to take

leave of Lord Palmerston. Lord Palmerston in the most insolent manner told him he might tell the King of Greece that he never should have a moment's peace or quiet until he gave his subjects a constitution; that he, Lord Palmerston, would take care that neither he nor any other sovereign who governed without a constitution should have any peace; that all people so governed had a right to 'insurger,' and he took good care to let them know that such was his opinion. I know this to be true, from the Greek Minister's own lips, who came away perfectly astounded at his insolence. Lord Palmerston poured out a torrent of abuse of Russia, and said to him, 'Votre roi veut faire le Russe, qu'il prenne garde à lui. Et la Bavière aussi, nous avons bien assez de la Russie, et nous n'en voulons point.'

Before the Session opened, Sir Robert Peel wrote fully to the Duke on the most important questions, taking care to intimate that he remained uncommitted until he should know the Duke's mind.

To the Duke of Wellington.

Drayton Manor: Jan. 26, 1839.

I have postponed writing to you, on the points which may be more immediately forced on our notice, till I had had the opportunity of seeing those of our friends whom I was likely to see in the country, and of hearing their opinions. I cannot say that I have gained much by the delay. But I have at least the satisfaction of thinking that we shall have no great difficulty in procuring a ready acquiescence in whatever we may recommend.

Parliament never probably met under circumstances of greater difficulty, and presenting greater cause for anxiety. However, the questions for present consideration are mainly those which may call for some decisive course on our part. The Corn Laws and Canada seem to me the most important points.

I take for granted we shall not be disposed to recommend, in the present state of public affairs and of parties,

any unnecessary amendment for the mere sake of trying the strength of parties. Nothing, therefore, but the being called on to assent to some principle, or to give some pledge, with regard to the Canadian question, or to alteration of the Corn Laws, will probably induce us to divide.

The debate upon the Address may turn very much upon these questions, and it may be of great importance to consider beforehand the language we shall hold in debate upon them. The accompanying memorandum contains some observations upon the two points.

In speaking to other persons upon them, I have committed myself to nothing, and am perfectly at liberty to adopt and to recommend to others any course, or the holding of any language, which we may deem most advisable.

Corn Laws.

Jan. 26, 1839.

The Government may take one or other of three courses on the Corn Laws. They may oppose alteration as a Government, they may recommend alteration as a Government, or they may make the question of Corn Laws an open question.

They will not take the first course. If they take the third, they will call for no declarations or pledges from Parliament on the Address. If they take the second—namely, make some alteration of the Corn Laws a Cabinet question—they will, no doubt, introduce the subject into the Speech, and they may so word the Address that it may be impossible for us to acquiesce. And for this contingency we ought to be well prepared.

I found it difficult to determine in my own mind what course the Government was likely to take, until I saw the papers of this morning.

After all the experience we have had, however, of late years, we must be prepared for the possibility of agitation encouraged by the Government, and, if forced to a division on the Address, must consider the purport and terms of the amendment to be moved.

Some of the expressions used by Lord Melbourne himself last Session, in his speech on the Corn Laws, might be introduced with effect, if amendment be unavoidable.

Jan. 27.—Since I wrote the above, a fourth course open to the Government has occurred to me as possible. Though unable as a Government to agree to a specific measure for the repeal or alteration of the Corn Laws, they may agree to recommend to Parliament inquiry into the operation of the Corn Laws, and to give this recommendation in the Speech from the Throne. I think it not improbable that this may be the course taken.

It would prevent the unseemly appearance of a divided Government, would relieve the Ministers from the embarrassment of leaving the question of the Corn Laws altogether untouched in the Speech, and would make an amendment to the Address more difficult.

I infer from Lord John Russell's published letter that the question will be an open one. He says he individually is in favour of a fixed duty, and means to support his opinion by his vote.

I can hardly think it possible that if the Government meant to bring forward a measure on the Corn Laws with all the authority of a Cabinet, and on the responsibility of the Queen's Government, it would be announced in such a manner a few days only before the Queen was to make an authoritative declaration in a Speech from the Throne.

It is difficult, indeed, to conceive that the Government would permit those newspapers which are supposed to be in its confidence to hold the language which they do hold—to denounce the landed proprietors as a class in the most offensive terms, and to encourage excitement and agitation throughout the country—if they mean to do nothing as a Government, and hope to appease the agitation by letting the question be an open one.

It is equally incredible on the other hand, looking at the position of Lord Melbourne in regard to the Queen, and remembering the language he held on the Corn Laws only last Session, that he would consent to the course

which, judging from the language of the Press, would seem to be in contemplation—namely, to bring forward some extensive alteration of the Corn Laws as a Government measure, call for some expression of opinion in the Address, and (being in a minority) to dissolve Parliament, trying to inflame the excitement—inseparable from dissolution at any time—on such a question as the Corn Laws, by pointing to the opposition of the House of Lords in particular to the Queen and her Government.

Canada and Lord Durham.

Probably the Government will take a tone on the Canadian questions which will not call for, perhaps not justify, amendment on our part.

As to Lord Durham, it appears to me that we should suspend any decided declarations as to the course we will pursue, until after we shall have heard the explanations he means to offer, and the counter-explanations of the Government. It will be open for us distinctly to explain that the cause of our forbearance is the public notice given of intended explanations, and that we reserve to ourselves the unfettered right of proceeding afterwards as we may think proper.

I will, however, keep myself entirely free from any pledge from this point, nor will I form any irrevocable opinion until I can confer personally with you upon it.

It was decided to take no action on the Address, and the only amendment moved was from a Radical quarter.

‘To assure her Majesty that, as the amendment of the representative system enacted in 1832 has disappointed her Majesty’s people, and as that measure is not and cannot be final, her Majesty’s faithful Commons will take into their early consideration the further reform of the Commons House of Parliament.’

In opposing this, Lord John Russell announced that for him it was impossible to take part in further measures of Reform.

Sir Robert Peel, in coming to the aid of the Government against their Radical friends, observed dryly :

With respect to the first portion of the amendment—that the measure of 1832 has disappointed the expectations of her Majesty's people—as the hon. gentleman and others on that side of the House are such good judges, I defer to their authority ; and, as I prophesied disappointment, I do not dissent.

But I know that a demand for further reform, in the expectation of producing satisfaction or finality, would be only aggravating the disappointment. I am confident that, if all men are slaves who are not entitled to exercise the elective franchise, nothing will satisfy you short of universal suffrage. Thus you will go on infusing popular principles into the constitution until it ceases to be a monarchy, and then, when you are suffering under the bitter experience of the change, you will perhaps tell me, ' You were not a false prophet.'

In March a motion by Mr. Villiers against the Corn Laws was defeated by a majority of 147. The Government was divided, some voting Aye, some No.

To the Duke of Wellington.

March 19, 1839.

You will have seen that we had an excellent division on the Corn Laws last night. About seventy of our usual opponents voted with us.

Some of our wiseacres, the Duke of Buckingham of course being the chief mover, not content with their present position, want to make a party motion on the subject of the Corn Laws, censuring the Government by a resolution in both Houses—thus reviving the whole discussion which the Corn Law agitators wanted to prolong ; driving away from us all those who, being politically opposed to us, joined us in the division of last night ; forcing the Government to make the repeal of the Corn Laws a Cabinet question ; and risking the being in a

minority on a question connected with the Corn Laws, instead of a majority of 147.

I was waited on this morning by an emissary from the Carlton Club—at least, a small agricultural section—with this proposal, and I hope I have prevented what appeared to me egregious folly.

Two days later, the Lords having appointed a Select Committee to inquire into the state of Ireland, Ministers thought it necessary to move in the Commons a counter-vote of confidence in the Irish Government. The Duke of Wellington, it appears, regretted the vote in the Lords, and ‘would not have allowed it,’ had he not believed that it had Sir Robert Peel’s sanction.

To the Duke of Wellington.

House of Commons : March 22.

Lord John Russell observed upon what had taken place in the House of Lords this morning.

He said it was evident from the terms of the motion that it was a censure upon the present Government; that, although Parliament had not sanctioned their legislative measures, yet through the confidence of one House of Parliament and the forbearance of another they had been able to administer the executive government in Ireland; that it became necessary, in consequence of the vote of the Lords, to ascertain whether the House of Commons continued to approve of the principles on which the Irish government had been conducted, and that he should with that view himself make a motion calling for a declaration of opinion on the subject. No further remark was made.

Before Lord John got up, there was a very general impression, in consequence of the reports of their own subordinate members, that the Government had actually resigned.

Lord Mahon, in reporting to the Duke the same facts, adds : ‘This is precisely the result which your Grace has always apprehended to ensue from any aggressive motion in the Lords.’

From the Duke of Wellington.

Strathfieldsaye : March 23, 1839.

I have always objected to these motions in the House of Lords. The Irish noblemen came but little prepared with a case, and it is very difficult to bring to a favourable termination their discussions on the motion.

I should not have allowed this motion to be made, if I had not understood that it had been determined at a meeting at your house that a motion for papers should be made in the House of Commons, founded on real substantial cases, and that afterwards a motion should be made in the House of Lords for inquiry into the administration of the law.

I supported the motion on the ground of the notoriety of the insecurity of life and property in Ireland.

To the Duke of Wellington.

Whitehall : March 25, 1839.

I entirely concur in the grounds on which you rested your vote on Lord Roden's motion.

I did not give any sanction to the Irish proceedings, particularly in the House of Lords, until after the day on which I saw you upon the subject.

I had not any meeting after that, but I wrote a memorandum in which I stated that I had conferred with you ; that we did not see any great advantage likely to result from a Committee in the Lords ; that the Government, from having access to official information, might produce counter-evidence which the proposers of inquiry could not calculate upon ; and I strongly advised that no case should be brought forward which had not previously been thoroughly sifted, and of which both sides had not been carefully considered. I added that if it was the decided wish of the Irish members to have an inquiry, we should not oppose it.

I thought the object had been merely a Committee of

inquiry in the Lords, to ascertain the real facts as to the state of crime.

I asked Mr. Shaw this morning why the motion was not made general, and why the inquiry was made to begin from the year 1835; and he admitted, without giving any very satisfactory reason for it, that this was done after he had asked my opinion.

My impression was that the Government would not have opposed an inquiry into the state of crime, and would not have considered it in the light of a criminating motion.

The real truth is, I suppose, that they find the country and all its dependencies in such a state, and that they are so incensed with the opposition they meet with from their own supporters, that they are glad to find any pretext either for abandoning their posts or for rallying their friends on some topic on which they agree.

In the House of Commons, on the very night of Lord Roden's motion, Lord John Russell opposed a motion of Mr. Hume for a new Reform Bill. The motion was defeated by 85 to 50; but of the 85 only 28 were supporters of the Government.

Mr. Buller, Lord Durham's secretary, on Friday night made a vehement attack on the Government on the Boundary question.

In short, their position is such in the House of Commons, particularly after being in a minority of 145 on the Corn Law question, that I am not surprised at their wish to bring matters to an issue.

From the Duke of Wellington.

March 28, 1839.

The truth is that this affair is like every other. We have—we must have—a number of followers. They think that they know what ought to be done better than you and I. They don't care a pin about our opinions. They will risk the public interests, or a quarrel between the Houses, or any outrage on the part of the Government—designed to

get the better of the independent action of the House of Lords—in order to enjoy a momentary triumph; and some perhaps in the futile expectation that such triumph in the House of Lords will dissolve the Government.

These are the people upon whose support and assistance we are to depend, if we should undertake to carry on a Government—that is to say, to incur all the risks of such an undertaking at the present moment, as well to our reputation as to the safety of the country, of the Sovereign, and of all the great institutions, and of ourselves.

I cannot adequately express my disgust with such people.

To the Duke of Wellington.

Whitehall: April 1.

By his unusual proceeding, Lord John Russell gives us the full choice of many courses by way of amendment.

Will you turn in your mind the following one, which has these advantages: it does not evade the Irish question; it supports and keeps us in harmony with the House of Lords; and (as it appears to me) it is consistent with reason, justice, and parliamentary precedent?

The course I suggest for consideration is an amendment to be moved by us, stating in substance that we do not consider the appointment of a Committee of the House of Lords to inquire into the state of crime a sufficient reason for the Government's pursuing a course so novel and unprecedented as to call for a vote of approbation upon the general policy of their administration in Ireland:

That the opinion of one branch of the Legislature ought to be inferred rather from its general proceedings—from the support or opposition it may give to measures of the Government—than from abstract declarations:

That these declarations, if justifiable at all, ought only to be made after a mature consideration of the results of any particular policy, and after full inquiry into it:

That, so far as the state of crime is concerned, or the security of life and property, or the abatement of civil and

religious animosities in Ireland, we are not justified—judging from results—in expressing our approbation of the Irish policy of Government :

That we are not desirous of considering those results as sufficient ground for expressing condemnation :

That we resolve, therefore, that it would be premature on the part of the House of Commons to express any opinion, without instituting an inquiry into the state of Ireland, particularly with reference to crimes and outrages endangering life and property, and to the existence of associations which have a tendency to excite and perpetuate disturbance.

This would be substantially proposing the same practical course which the Lords have taken, assigning fully, and placing before the country, our reasons for it.

In case the Government should use this opportunity to resign, the Duke of Wellington took means to consult Sir Robert Peel on the advice to be given in that case to the Queen.

To Mr. Arbuthnot.

Whitehall: April 13, 1839.

I will of course consider your note of Thursday night entirely confidential.

I do not feel that, considering the position of the Queen, and considering the position of the Duke, I could with propriety seek to influence him, from any considerations of a personal nature to myself, in respect to the advice which he may feel it to be his duty to give. I could not ask him to forbear from any suggestion which he thought it right to offer.

I have the utmost confidence that whatever advice he does give will be as perfectly honest and disinterested advice as a sovereign ever did or could receive. But I must at the same time say that nothing was ever further from my wish than that her Majesty should send for me as her Minister. I have not the least desire for the office,

and foresee nothing but difficulty and embarrassment to him who undertakes it.

It may be my duty to encounter them—I may have no choice, should the Queen send for me, but to encounter them. But she will give me anything but mortification if she shall send for some one else, and leave me in a private station.

I will not stir a step to evade a public duty, but I must say at the same time that if my being Minister, or preventing any other person being Minister, to-morrow depended upon my crossing the street, I certainly would not cross it. This is, of course, for yourself.

A few weeks later the Whig Ministry fell, on a colonial question. In Jamaica, the House of Assembly, representing chiefly planters, aggrieved by the abolition of slavery and of negro apprenticeship, and further irritated by dictation from home as to their prisons, resisted Imperial interference as unconstitutional. On this the Whigs, following the precedent set by themselves in Canada, proposed to suspend the Constitution. The Conservatives thought this unnecessary, and, as some Radicals held the same opinion, ran the Government so near to a defeat that, abandoning all hope of carrying their Bill, they resigned. Whereupon the Queen sent for the Duke of Wellington, and an hour later for Sir Robert Peel.

From the Duke of Wellington.

, London: May 8, 1839.

I have received a summons to attend the Queen at Buckingham Palace at one o'clock. I am going there, and will go to you as soon as I can after I shall have seen her Majesty.

From the Queen.

The Queen requests Sir Robert Peel to come to her as soon as he can, if possible by two o'clock.

Buckingham Palace: May 8, 1839.

Meanwhile Sir Robert Peel had received some timely feminine counsel.

From Lady de Grey.

Tuesday, [May 7, 1839].

My dear Peel,—The vote of last night may probably call you into power. Pray forgive your most truly attached friend if she gives you a word of advice.

The Queen has always expressed herself much impressed with Lord Melbourne's open manner, and his truth. The latter quality you possess, the former not.

Now, dear Peel, the first impression on so young a girl's mind is of immense consequence, accustomed as she has been to the open and affectionate manner of Lord M., who, *entre nous*, treats her as a father, and, with all his faults, feels for her as such.

Forgive this. I wish you success from my friendship for you, from my high esteem and admiration of your noble character, and from the belief that you alone can avert the evils which threaten my country; and I fear that even with such qualities you may not succeed in gaining the Queen's confidence, as I think your bearing too reserved and too cautious.

Your very affectionate

H. DE GREY.

In a second letter from the same lady, 'G.' stands for Grantham, her husband's former name. Her brother was a leading Orangeman, the Earl of Enniskillen. Two years later her husband was sent as Viceroy to Ireland.

Dear Peel,—A thousand thanks for your kindness. I knew you would never doubt my motives.

G. returns to-morrow, I don't know at what hour. If it is Ireland, allow me to say that I cannot help thinking my Orange connection an insuperable objection.

My uncertain health, the misery of quitting my remaining children, the impossibility of being of use there—he will do anything he can for you, but oh, if you can, spare us this trial. Do.

Your affectionate

H. DE G.

What passed with the Queen is thus recorded :

Memorandum.

On Wednesday, May 8, the Queen sent for me to Buckingham Palace. Her Majesty told me she had previously seen the Duke of Wellington about an hour before, that she had asked his assistance in forming a Government, that he had declined on account of his advanced age, and the necessity in his opinion of the Minister being in the House of Commons, and had recommended her Majesty to send for me.

The Queen said she hoped I would undertake the task of forming a Government. She observed that she had parted with her late Government with great regret.

I told her Majesty that I felt it to be my duty to render her any assistance in my power.

She said she hoped I did not propose to dissolve Parliament, and that she had great objections to dissolution.

I said that I should not advise dissolution without a previous attempt to carry on the Government with the present Parliament ; that I presumed her Majesty did not require any engagement from me not to advise dissolution in any contingency that might occur ; and that she did not intend to imply an invincible objection to dissolution even in the event of my being unable to command a majority in the present House of Commons. If that was her Majesty's intention, I could not undertake the commission with which she proposed to honour me.

Her Majesty said it was not, but hoped I concurred with her that dissolution ought, if possible, to be avoided for the present. I replied that that was my opinion.

Her Majesty begged me to understand that it was her particular wish that the Duke of Wellington should form a part of the Government. I said no one could estimate more highly than I did the value of the Duke's name and services, and that I should think his assistance indispensable.

I observed to her Majesty that I hoped to be enabled in the course of the following day to submit for her approval appointments to all the principal offices of the State.

The Foreign Office was accepted by the Duke of Wellington.

From Mr. Arbuthnot.

Apsley House : May 8, 1839.

Fortunately I caught the Duke, ready dressed and sitting in his room.

I repeated to him what you said against his being in the Cabinet only as a Privy Councillor.

He said, 'Very well, I am quite ready to have the Foreign Office'—which I had named to him in the way that you wished I should—and added, 'that he had promised the Queen to serve her in any way that would be thought most advisable, and that he would keep his promise.'

He merely remarked that in his own mind he should have been of opinion that it might have been better to keep the Foreign Office for some other person, and to have left him leader of the House of Lords, in the Cabinet, and without any office. He did not dwell on this more than merely to make the remark.

I told him that I had assured you there was no danger, as I apprehended, of the work in the Foreign Office being too much for his health.

On this he said that he was as equal as ever he was to any sort of business, and that after all he could at any time give the office up, should he find it too much for him.

The Memorandum proceeds :

On Wednesday evening [May 8] I conferred at a meeting held at my house with those gentlemen whom I proposed to name to her Majesty the following day for some of the principal offices of State.

They were the Duke of Wellington, Lord Lyndhurst,

Lord Aberdeen, Lord Ellenborough, Lord Stanley, Sir James Graham, Mr. Goulburn, Sir Henry Hardinge.

In the course of the discussion which took place, I alluded to the general views which I meant to submit to her Majesty with respect to the Household.

They were as follows. That I should express an opinion to her Majesty that it was indispensable to my success that I should have that proof of her Majesty's support and confidence which would be implied by a change in those offices of the Household which were of a political character, and held by members of either House of Parliament.

With respect to that part of the Household of her Majesty which consisted of appointments held by ladies, I stated that I should not think of proposing to her Majesty any change whatever in those appointments that were of a subordinate character, particularly referring to the appointments of Maids of Honour and the Women of the Bedchamber.

With respect to the higher appointments, I stated my impression to be that those ladies who were the immediate relatives of members of the late Government, or of persons taking a very prominent part in politics opposed to mine, would in all probability resign. That I should certainly feel it my duty to submit to her Majesty that it would impair the efficiency and stability of the Government in public opinion, if they did not relinquish their situations.

But I did expressly mention instances of ladies, being Ladies of the Bedchamber, wherein it would be quite unnecessary to propose that any change should be made.

On this question of the Household, one of Sir Robert Peel's first acts was to consult Lord Ashley, who describes the interview, coloured possibly by his own feelings.

May 9.

Peel opened conversation by saying that the sense of responsibility weighed him down. 'Here am I,' added he, 'called on to consider the construction of the Queen's Household, and I wish very much to have your free and confidential

advice. I remember that I am to provide the attendants and companions of this young woman, on whose moral and religious character depends the welfare of millions of human beings. What shall I do? I wish to have around her those who will be, to the country and to myself, a guarantee that the tone and temper of their character and conversation will tend to her moral improvement. The formation of a Cabinet, the appointment to public offices, is easy enough; it is a trifle compared to the difficulties and necessities of this part of my business. Now,' said he, 'will *you* assist me; will *you* take a place in the Queen's Household?'

Lord Ashley answered that he would, and adds:

My impression was, throughout, that never did I see a man in a higher frame of mind for the discharge of his duties; in a state of heart more solemn, more delicate, and more virtuous. I am sure that no parent ever felt towards his own daughter a more deep sense of duty and affection than he did towards Queen Victoria.

Before evening suggestions poured in from all quarters. Lord Ashley had prepared a list of persons whom he thought suitable to be about the Queen.

From Lord Ashley.

Thursday, May 9, 1839 (half-past five).

I am more and more convinced, after reflecting, that it would be of the very greatest importance that the Duke of Wellington (should he not be unwilling) should occupy a post in the Household. He would most unquestionably become extremely agreeable to the Queen, and certain I am that the country would be enraptured with the appointment.

I have thought of and discussed with Lady Ashley many persons. I think I can suggest many who will be both acceptable to her Majesty and to the public.

May 10.—As for yourself, go on nothing doubting. Never in the history of the Church of Christ was there a more eventful period than this, in which you are called by a merciful Providence to rule, under the Queen, this mighty nation.

If your prayers to God for wisdom and support be half as many and as fervent as those which (I may almost say I know) are rising from thousands of believing hearts in supplication for the prosperity of your Government, I should laugh at every effort of man or devil; for then the floods may rise and the winds may beat, but your house will not fall, for it will be founded on a rock.

Stanley had a word to say for his friend Ripon and others.

From Lord Stanley.

St. James's Square : May 9, 1839.

My dear Peel,—Ripon has this moment been with me, anxious to know what was going on. I thought I was justified in telling him in confidence that Graham and I had accepted two of the Secretaryships of State, and that I believed the Duke of Wellington would take the Foreign Office. I said I knew it was your intention to offer Ripon a seat in the Cabinet, but of offices I knew nothing.

He said he was quite satisfied, that he should not have liked to be passed over, but that you would not find him exigent. I thought it best to tell you this at once.

I have a letter from Emerson Tennent, begging me to forward his suit with you for 'a working office,' and assuring me of the certainty of his re-election.

After I left you last night, in thinking of Drummond's situation [the Under-Secretaryship in Ireland], the name of my late private secretary, Mr. Earle, occurred to me. He is now Poor Law Commissioner in Dublin, a barrister, hardworking, and popular in his manners, and was my private secretary all through my Irish Secretaryship.

Should you see any objection to my offering the Under-Secretaryship of the Colonies to George Hope? I think

he would do it well, and I have arranged with Graham that he does not want one in Parliament. If I have one there, my possible removal from the House of Commons would make less change necessary.

Yours ever,
STANLEY.

Mr. Croker, as usual, was collecting accurate information, and catering for his friend Brougham.

From Mr. Croker.

(Confidential.)

West Molesey: May 9, 1839.

I think I can venture to assure you that up to last night Lord Durham had not been consulted by any one on the formation of a Ministry.

Lord Normanby had been at the Palace, but whether by special invitation or not you know best. I know only the fact, and that assuredly Durham has not been yet consulted in any way or by anybody.

Brougham talks of doing anything that may be agreeable and useful. He will go abroad for a year or two, or he would accept a special mission to negotiate a slave trade treaty with France. I had rather see him Chief Baron, or in some such legal business as would restrain his exuberance. Depend upon it, the House of Lords cannot go on smoothly or safely if he is not somehow muzzled. He might go on the mission, *en attendant* a legal vacancy.

There is at the moment great hostility between the Whigs and Radicals, but when they have sat a fortnight on the same benches, and voted half a dozen times together, they will be as thick as inkle weavers.

Give the House a fair trial, and if that fails, dissolve. I say if it fails, for one division would not satisfy me. You must be William Pitt *tertius*, *minus* Gatton.

It was assumed that Sir Robert Peel was Minister. But at his second audience the Queen, understanding him to propose 'to remove the Ladies of her Bedchamber,' had refused leave, and next day by letter had confirmed her refusal. His own

different impression of what had passed was submitted by him in writing to the Queen, and afterwards, with her Majesty's full permission, to Parliament.

From the Queen.

Buckingham Palace: May 10, 1839.

The Queen having considered the proposal made to her yesterday by Sir Robert Peel, to remove the Ladies of her Bedchamber, cannot consent to adopt a course which she conceives to be contrary to usage, and which is repugnant to her feelings.

To the Queen.

Whitehall: May 10, 1839.

Sir Robert Peel presents his humble duty to your Majesty, and has had the honour of receiving your Majesty's note of this morning.

In respectfully submitting to your Majesty's pleasure, and humbly returning into your Majesty's hands the important trust which your Majesty had been graciously pleased to commit to him, Sir Robert Peel trusts that your Majesty will permit him to state to your Majesty his impression with respect to the circumstances which have led to the termination of his attempt to form an Administration for the conduct of your Majesty's service.

In the interview with which your Majesty honoured Sir Robert Peel yesterday morning, after he had submitted to your Majesty the names of those whom he proposed to recommend to your Majesty for the principal executive appointments, he mentioned to your Majesty his earnest wish to be enabled, with your Majesty's sanction, so to constitute your Majesty's Household that your Majesty's confidential servants might have the advantage of a public demonstration of your Majesty's full support and confidence, and that at the same time, as far as possible consistently with that demonstration, each individual appointment in the Household should be entirely acceptable to your Majesty's personal feelings.

On your Majesty's expressing a desire that the Earl of Liverpool should hold an office in the Household, Sir Robert Peel requested your Majesty's permission at once to offer to Lord Liverpool the office of Lord Steward, or any other which he might prefer.

Sir Robert Peel then observed that he should have every wish to apply a similar principle to the chief appointments which are filled by the Ladies of your Majesty's Household; upon which your Majesty was pleased to remark that you must reserve the whole of those appointments, and that it was your Majesty's pleasure that the whole should continue as at present, without any change.

The Duke of Wellington, in the interview to which your Majesty subsequently admitted him, understood also that this was your Majesty's determination; and concurred with Sir Robert Peel in opinion that, considering the great difficulties of the present crisis, and the expediency of making every effort in the first instance to conduct the business of the country with the aid of the present Parliament, it was essential to the business of the commission with which your Majesty had honoured Sir Robert Peel, that he should have that public proof of your Majesty's entire support and confidence which would be afforded by the permission to make some changes in that part of your Majesty's Household which your Majesty resolved on maintaining entirely without change.

Having had the opportunity, through your Majesty's gracious consideration, of reflecting upon this point, he humbly submits to your Majesty that he is reluctantly compelled by a sense of public duty, and of the interests of your Majesty's service, to adhere to the opinion which he ventured to express to your Majesty.

He trusts he may be permitted at the same time to express to your Majesty his grateful acknowledgments for the distinction which your Majesty conferred upon him by requiring his advice and assistance in the attempt to form an Administration, and his earnest prayer that whatever

arrangements your Majesty may be enabled to make for that purpose may be most conducive to your Majesty's personal comfort and happiness, and to the promotion of the public welfare.

Other letters throw light on the question raised, or record the angry passions and wild misrepresentations called forth at the time.

From Sir James Graham.

(*Private.*) Grosvenor Place: Thursday evening [May 9, 1839].

I had intended to go to Cambridge this evening, but I am half blind and in great pain, some lime having been thrown into my eye.

When I arrived at home, I was surprised to hear from Fanny that she had heard at two o'clock this afternoon of the refusal of her Majesty to permit the removal of 'some' of the Ladies of the Household. At five o'clock she was told that there was 'a hitch' in the formation of the Government, and that her Majesty had positively forbidden the removal of 'any one' of the Ladies.

The time and the quarter from which this information reached her indicate that this resistance was known to her late Ministers.

From Lord De la Warr.

I heard enough at the Palace last night to satisfy me that much serious mischief has been done by the propagation of the most infamous falsehoods, and that if they remain much longer without an authoritative contradiction much more will be done. Witness the 'Morning Chronicle' and the 'Advertiser' of this morning. The poison too, I know, is spreading through the middle ranks.

The delusions I witnessed last night are astounding. The 'Morning Chronicle,' which you probably have seen, is ten times worse.

A few days later Croker was losing touch with Brougham, but teeming still with confident predictions. Brougham was to become a Radical. The Queen was to yield.

From Mr. Croker.

14 Duke Street : Sunday, May 12, 1839.

It is clear that Brougham wishes to coalesce, and probably has done so, with the Grote-Leader Radicals. He adopts household suffrage, and 'a good deal more,' ballot, &c. He would not, as I guess, more from his tone than his letter to me, oppose you this Session perhaps, but he means to be President not of the Council but of the Republic. So you must put no trust in him.

I expect to hear to-day or to-morrow that you are again sent for. It is *impossible* that the combination we heard of yesterday can be permanently arranged, in face of the facts of the case. Those facts would defeat a still stronger combination than any of those mentioned.

The 'Spectator' takes a useful line, and seems to agree with me, that the negotiation *cannot* be finally broken off by the nonsense about the Women.

It appears that Mr. Croker's prophecy might have come true but for the Queen's firm will.

From Lord Ashley.

(*Confidential.*)

May 12, 1839.

I have just this instant heard that the Cabinet decided yesterday to surrender the whole thing, and advise the Queen to renew her negotiations with you.

The Queen was so warm, and almost transported, that on a second deliberation they determined to support her, although they confess that the demand of two or three ladies was perfectly reasonable.

They are determined, therefore—I know not how they will defend it—to resume the Government, and maintain the Queen in what they have admitted to be unjust and improper!

Sir Robert Peel's defence of his persistence on this occasion may be read in Hansard's 'Debates.' His friends thought it masterly and convincing. They congratulated him also on the reply of Lord John Russell.

From Sir James Graham.

Grosvenor Place : May 13, 1839.

I cannot refrain from congratulating you cordially on the triumph of this evening. Truth and honesty still prevail over every difficulty, and although I felt anxiety, yet I never had a doubt that your success would be complete.

Nothing was omitted, nothing was said, that we could have wished otherwise. It was not only the victory of a superior mind, it was the triumph of generous feeling and of pure integrity.

I walked home with Stanley, and I am sure you have no friend who could more truly rejoice in this signal vindication of your superiority. We agree that, come what may, you never will regret the decision which you have so well defended, and though queens may frown and courtiers intrigue, yet if the monarchy is to be defended, yours is the only hand which can combine and wield the weapons of defence.

From Lord Ellenborough.

Grosvenor Place : May 13, 1839.

I cannot wait till to-morrow to tell you how entirely your speech satisfied me, expressing everything it was right to say, and avoiding everything it was right to avoid, with equal felicity.

I should congratulate you still more on Lord John's speech than on your own.

The following remarks appear to be in reply to criticisms on Sir Robert Peel's speech by Mr. Goulburn.

1. The disclaimers of any desire for office, and the expressions of reluctance to undertake it, may be carried much too far.

What are we fighting for, but the predominance of our principles ? and if the acceptance of office will advance

them, office ought to be accepted. Men who try to put the Government in a minority on the Jamaica Bill must not talk too much about their disinclination for office. Perhaps I am as much disinclined to office as any one, and for that very reason I am cautious in not talking too much about disinclination. It is very dispiriting language to your friends, and argues a fear of responsibility in critical times.

2. I did not know the precise facts of the case, and the degree to which the Ministers were responsible for what took place, till Lord John Russell, who followed me, made his speech.

It might have been possible to be very deferential towards the Queen, and very indignant towards her Ministers, but there was very great risk in taking such a course. Any demonstration of angry feeling or irritation would have been in my opinion misplaced, and I think Lord John Russell would have greatly preferred such a demonstration on my part to entire calmness and forbearance.

The violence of some Radicals, who took the Queen's side against a Tory Minister, seems to have exposed Sir Robert Peel's home, if not his person, to some risk of attack.

From Mr. James Austin.

Chancery Lane: May 9, 1839.

I think it right to inform you that I overheard a conversation last night, that if you took office your life, or that of the Duke of Wellington, would be taken the first opportunity.

From Lord John Russell.

Whitehall: May 14, 1839.

Lord John Russell presents his compliments to Sir Robert Peel, and has the honour to send him extracts of letters which he has received this day from Birmingham.

Lord John Russell will take care that a good look-out is

kept on any parties who may attempt to attack Sir Robert Peel's house at Drayton, and measures adopted to defeat any such outrage.

From two friends of impartial judgment came kind words of temperate approval.

From Lord Camden.

Charles Street, Berkeley Square: May 16, 1839.

My dear Sir,—In matters of so much difficulty and delicacy as those you have lately been engaged in, it may not be unpleasant to you to learn that the conduct pursued by you meets the entire approbation of one who has formerly been in active life, but who from his age has now much retired.

Yours very truly,

CAMDEN.

From Lord Liverpool.

May 20, 1839.

I have reflected a good deal upon what passed between us on Friday, and having since also seen and heard a good deal on the same subject, I feel it a duty to write you this letter.

My early acquaintance and connection through my daughter with her Majesty has given me a right to have an opinion upon her motives and actions. Perhaps you will say that this opinion must be a prejudiced one, but at all events I will state it fairly, leaving you to put what construction you please upon it. When her Majesty's female household was first formed, upon her accession, it was the wish of her uncle, King Leopold, which also was acquiesced in by her Majesty, that persons of all parties should compose it, and certainly it is but fair and just for me to say that no objection was made by Lord Melbourne in several instances to appointments, or offers of appointments, to persons of adverse politics to himself. Thus Lady Manvers

was offered a Ladyship of the Bedchamber, Lady Harriet Clive was made Bedchamber Woman, and Miss Pitt and Miss Cox were made Maids of Honour.

The thing failed in several instances, from the persons declining the appointments, which it then became necessary to fill up, and of which the Ministers of course under such circumstances availed themselves.

It is not, therefore, surprising that her Majesty, naturally tenacious of matters of this sort, should have adopted her erroneous idea, that her female household was not to be displaced.

I say erroneous idea, for I have no scruple in declaring that I think that a Prime Minister is fully justified in insisting upon any arrangements in the Household, whether male or female, which he may consider essential to the demonstration to the world that he has the unimpaired support and confidence of the Sovereign.

Such is my opinion, and I should have submitted it to her Majesty had I been in London when she did me the honour to send for me. What effect it might have had I do not know, but I must tell you that it would have been coupled with a communication to yourself, advising you in the strongest manner if this point were conceded not to exercise it harshly. My motives would have been detailed to you as follows: I feel convinced that all the Ladies of the Bedchamber except Lady Normanby would have immediately resigned; and if this had occurred, is it possible to suppose she would have dared to retain her place? But even supposing she had, I really think that the absurd and ridiculous position in which she would have been placed would have entirely annihilated her capacity of mischief.

As far as I am personally concerned I am perhaps lucky in having been out of the way. I should probably have offended the Queen by asserting the unlimited privilege of the Minister, and you by my impertinent advice as to the exercise of this privilege, and I should have persuaded neither. Still, I should have done my duty, and I cannot

help regretting that by my idleness and indisposition to meddle this was not done.

You cannot dislike public business more than I do. But give me leave to say that if I, possessing no talents and no weight in the country, think that I must not shrink from my Sovereign's service because my family have served the Crown for eighty years, you are still more bound to the oar, who by your talents and position deservedly lead so vast a party in the country.

I have been confirmed in the necessity of addressing this to you by the violence and intemperance with which I perceive that many of the Conservative party treat these events.

I will not examine into their motives, but I feel quite sure that it must do harm, inasmuch as it will be carried to the Queen in some shape or other, and lead her to expect all kinds of harshness on the part of the Conservatives.

I have already written you too long a letter, but I cannot conclude without imploring you to reflect on all this, and on your return to town do everything in your power to pour oil on these excited waves.

From Lord Ashley.

London : May 21, 1839.

Melbourne is evidently alarmed at the progress of Radicalism, and disgusted by the insolent and excessive demands of the Jacobinical hodge-podge in the House of Commons. He cannot, with the least affectation of being a gentleman, accept even a tithe of their conditions, and being thus convinced that it is impossible for him to carry on the Government, he is now labouring to save the Queen from the fangs of Radicalism, and persuade her to resort to the Tories as the best defenders of her throne.

I think he will succeed. I heard yesterday from a lady, to whom he said it, that he implored her to use all her influence to prevail on you not to say that you could not

take the Government. 'He must have it,' he exclaimed, 'it is absolutely necessary, he must have it.'

The Queen seems low-spirited, but not angry now. Her manner last night to Normanby (I dined at Buckingham Palace), though very civil, was by no means marked. On the contrary, two or three things occurred which I thought of a dispiriting character to a candidate for the Premiership.

She said the other day, when reading some attack on her in some low paper professing to be on our side, 'The Tories do all in their power to make themselves odious to me.' The fact is that from her earliest years she has been taught to regard us as her personal enemies. I am told the language at Kensington was such as to inspire her with fear and hatred. And certainly Melbourne's hedge of male and female Whigs was not adapted to remove this prejudice by letting in Tory light.

Our papers in general have been cautious, and so have the members of the Carlton. I begin to hope that, if no more be said, the asperity may be softened. As her real objection was, however, less to the admission of the Conservative party, than to the removal of Melbourne and his colleagues, I really think that, if he now earnestly and honestly warn her of the dangers that beset the Empire, and give her fervently the counsel that he feels to be true, your Administration will be peaceably and firmly established.

To an address from Shrewsbury, approving the conduct of Sir Robert Peel, he has left, in his own handwriting, the draft of a full reply.

Whitehall: June 4, 1839.

I have a strong conviction that in expressing your opinion that my conduct in the recent transactions to which your declaration refers, has been in conformity with constitutional principles, you are anticipating the judgment which, after the lapse of a short period, will be pronounced by a very large majority of that portion of the community

whose deliberate sentiments ultimately prevail over misrepresentation and calumny, and constitute public opinion in this country.

Be this, however, as it may, you may depend upon it that I shall steadily adhere to the principles of which you have approved, and that I shall never accept office upon any condition or understanding which may appear to me incompatible with the constitutional authority of a Minister of the Crown, or which would restrain me from advising such an exercise of that authority as I might deem necessary for the efficient performance of the great public trust for which a Minister is responsible.

I am firmly persuaded that the Constitution of this country does not recognise any distinction in respect to public appointments provided for by Act of Parliament, and instituted for purposes of State, on account of the sex of the parties holding them, and that no Minister would be justified in divesting himself of all control or responsibility in respect to a particular class of such appointments.

If I deemed certain changes in that class necessary for public purposes, it was as clearly my duty to advise them as it was the duty of Lord Grey and Lord Grenville in 1812 to require 'that the connection of the great offices of the Court with the political Administration should be clearly established in its first arrangements.'

They claimed for themselves the credit, which I claim, of having acted on public grounds, and they assigned as the justification of their conduct the very same ground which is the justification of mine, namely their firm conviction 'that it was necessary to give to a new Government that character of efficiency and stability, and those marks of the constitutional support of the Crown, which were required to enable it to act usefully for the public service.'

If the Constitution does recognise a distinction between public appointments on account of the sex of the parties holding them, the example of Lord Grey and Lord Grenville in 1812 is certainly no authority. If the Constitution does

not recognise such distinction, there is no difference between the principle for which I contended, and that upon which Lord Grey and Lord Grenville acted.

At the same time no one can feel more deeply, nor admit more fully than I do, that the constitutional right to advise changes in the Household is a perfectly different question from the exercise of that right, and that the exercise of it, particularly in respect to those appointments in the Household which formed the chief subject of recent discussion, should be restrained by every possible deference to the wishes and every possible consideration for the feelings of the Sovereign.

But I must contend that, if I deemed it necessary to advise any changes in those appointments, I am much less responsible for the necessity than those Ministers who had not merely given to this department of the Household a political character, but who had established its immediate connection with the Administration by permitting their nearest female relatives to occupy the chief appointments.

With respect to the various calumnies at which you express your indignation, I have a perfect assurance that they will ultimately recoil upon the authors of them, and that the course which I have pursued in public life for the period of thirty years will effectually protect me from the imputation of having acted with 'disloyal insolence.'

CHAPTER XV.

1839-40.

The Queen and Prince Albert—Suggestions for the coming Session—
 Deficits, their Cause and Cure—Cathedral Reform—Political Prospects—
 Wellington against an Attack—Graham for it—Wellington against
 Union of the Canadas—Peel for it—Wellington against taking Office.

IN the autumn, while the Bedchamber affair was keeping in
 office a Ministry not in power, an event took place which was to
 change the whole relations of the Crown with the Conservative
 party—the Queen's engagement to Prince Albert. From October
 onwards it begins to claim a place in the correspondence.

To Mr. Arbuthnot.

Oct. 30, 1839.

Croker seems to doubt the rapid advance of the
 Windsor courtship. Still I think the general impression is
 that a marriage is intended. Howe wrote me word that
 there can be no doubt of it.

From Lord Ashley.

(*Private.*)

Oct. 31, 1839.

I think I may now assure you that the Queen's marriage
 with Prince Albert is finally settled, but will not be publicly
 announced before the meeting of Parliament.

His extreme youth is a very serious objection, but the
 Radicals will overlook that in the 'liberality' of his senti-
 ments, for he is everywhere reported to be 'liberally
 disposed.' Such is the preliminary humbug to his accept-
 ance with the nation.

He has been selected, I hear, as a young gentleman who
 will not busy himself in politics or affairs of State, who will

rather pursue hunting, shooting, dancing, and other amiable distractions. I am informed, however, by the Duchess of Cambridge, who knows him well, that he is the reverse of this, and entertains very stirring and ambitious views.

I found in Scotland a great change for the better in men's minds. At Glasgow the feeling has crept up so effectively that we have a majority on the registration. Lord Camperdown confided to me that he was alarmed at the general state of things. 'I care not,' said he, 'who is in or out. I do not say who is right or wrong, but we ought to have a Government, or all will be lost.' Lord Fitzwilliam also mentioned that he was much displeased by the appointment of Macaulay, as indicating a very fearful tendency in Ministerial measures. Tollemache, who possesses a mighty property here in Cheshire, has openly left the Whig ranks, and is ready to offer himself as a candidate against Stanley at the next election.

Scotland is torn by the patronage question, but I found many very good, wise, and able men who differ *toto cœlo* from Dr. Chalmers.

To Mr. Arbuthnot.

Whitehall: Nov. 4 [1839].

I have no doubt whatever that Sir Francis Head was the author of the article in the 'Quarterly Review.'

People very much mistake the constitution of the Conservative party who suppose that it will be held together under such a system of worrying and vexatious tactics as the article recommends. A Radical Opposition might pursue it: those might pursue it who wish to cut down the prerogatives of the Crown, and to introduce the House of Commons into every department of the State, at the expense—and, be it remembered, the permanent, everlasting expense—of the authority of the Executive. But such a system does not very well consort with Conservative principles. Even if it did, it would not be long practically acted upon with much effect.

When gentlemen complain, as they do now, that the division does not take place precisely at the hour which enables them to dine comfortably and be down by half-past ten, they would soon get tired of a plan of operations which, to be successfully acted upon, must require incessant and general attendance.

After you had deducted the idle, the shuffling, the diners-out, the country gentlemen with country occupations, and above all the moderate and quiet men disliking the principle of a factious Opposition, we should find the Conservative ranks pretty well thinned.

Whatever our policy was, it succeeded so far that it put out the Government. It forced, or at least induced, their resignation.

The cause of our not forming a Government was one of quite a different nature, and one that I apprehend would have existed, by whatever means we had effected the expulsion of our opponents.

All that has passed since has convinced me that we were right in refusing to accept power on the express condition that the wives, sisters, and daughters of our enemies should hold the chief Household offices; and that, if we had consented to such a condition, we should not only have failed, but failed after having submitted to the dishonour of an unconstitutional and discreditable concession.

During the winter Sir Robert Peel received many suggestions for the coming Session. In reply to one on habitual deficits, his remarks on their cause, and on the cure, show how practically he was already thinking out the way of dealing with this, the chief bequest expected from the Whigs.

To Mr. Goulburn.

Drayton Manor: Nov. 25, 1839.

Until within the last two years I had some confidence that the Reformed Parliament would maintain public faith inviolably, and support the public credit. But that confidence has been of late much shaken.

Before we could move a resolution embodying your just views as to the evil of systematic exceeding of revenue, and the still greater evil of accustoming the public mind to the shame of constant deficit, we must consider the more practical and more difficult question, by what means can the deficit be most advantageously supplied? Or, in other words, more startling to a House of Commons, What new taxes could be imposed?

I do not believe that habitual deficit arises merely from indifference and unwillingness to contemplate a new tax. I think it is part of the policy of the Radicals; and that they think that by this means they can exercise a greater control over a Government, and enforce reduction of establishments with greater effect.

We shall have to combat, therefore, not only the impatience of new taxation, but the policy of a party hostile in principle to an excess of revenue.

But I shall not be at all deterred by the alliance of such opponents from proposing that which we may feel to be right. For our acquiescence in what we know to be wrong (though we may not be able to repair it) only aggravates the evil, and confirms the public mind in false views of the public interests.

I advise that we should in the first instance communicate with the Duke of Wellington, Herries, and Lord Ashburton, thinking less of the abstract impolicy of deficit than of the means of practically supplying it.

The remainder of this letter to an intimate friend shows how sincerely disposed Sir Robert Peel was to support the reforms of the Ecclesiastical Commission, of which he was the author.

As to the Chapter question, I understood distinctly that if the Regulation Bill of last Session were postponed for a year, the Chapters themselves would suggest some mode by which an equal amount of available revenue could be derived from Cathedral funds, with less of interference with Cathedral privileges and establishments, and less of pain to the private feelings of the members.

Unless they do something effectual without delay, there will be, I think, well-founded complaint that the sole object is to procure the postponement of the impending Bill. I feel it absolutely necessary to reserve to myself the liberty to act upon the original suggestions of the Commissioners, in the event of the Church having nothing to propose, and its appearing that from the moment when the immediate menace of the Bill was withdrawn the Chapters thought no more about the matter.

If the Chapters do nothing, then I think the heads of the Church should interfere.

From Mr. Croker came an alarming account of the Duke of Wellington's health, happily not confirmed by his doctor, or Arbuthnot, or himself. The letter seems to have caused Sir Robert Peel anxiety, for which he takes revenge by a remark on the gossiping propensities of 'some people.'

From Mr. Croker.

50 Albemarle Street: Nov. 20, 1839.

What I hear is, that after hunting on Monday, when the Duke went to dress, he had some kind of fit, and was for a time insensible, but recovered enough and in time to say that his dinner company was not to be put off, and to request that Colonel Munro should do the honours. Hume was immediately sent for, and arrived early next morning. He writes that it is all stomach, and that there is no paralysis in it, and that all will soon be well again.

I am convinced that it is a repetition of the attack in the spring, and of course very alarming, for the repetition of such fits proves something organically wrong.

To Mr. Arbuthnot.

Drayton Manor: Dec. 5, 1839.

I am very much gratified by your letter, and the authentic and satisfactory account it conveys of the Duke's state of health.

Some people cannot be trusted with a fact. They consider a piece of intelligence a sort of property, which they

have a right to 'exploiter,' as the French say; and set about giving all their friends a share in the joint-stock concern. Their friends generally follow their example, and circulate with interest the original stock of information.

I should not have discovered that the Duke had been seriously unwell when I saw him at the Council. I merely thought him looking a little thinner, as if he had been under the discipline of medicine.

The omission of any allusion to the Protestantism of Prince Albert was in my opinion a most foolish and unnecessary piece of 'liberality.' Dr. McHale himself would have thought nothing of adherence to the precedent of George III. It would have offended nobody.

I suppose the Ministers mean to recognise the Act of Settlement, and the Protestantism of the Crown, which are not less offensive than a simple declaration that the Queen had selected a Protestant prince for her husband.

From the Duke of Wellington.

Strathfieldsaye : Dec. 6, 1839.

I am much obliged to you for the interest you have expressed about me. The truth is, that I am as well at this moment, as strong, and as well able to bear fatigue, as I was twenty years ago. I must continue for some time longer to be careful about catching cold. But I shall be out hunting yet before Parliament meets.

I quite concur in your opinion about the Irish representative peerage. It is a very troublesome affair, and no one can manage it but ourselves.

I entertain no doubt but that we have it in our power to carry the election for any candidate who may have reasonable pretensions, against any other. But it is best that the Irish resident peers should decide for themselves.

It is most desirable that the choice should be in the hands of the resident peers as much as possible, and not in ours, as in the latter case an endeavour will be made to turn it to patronage, to which we must object.

From Mr. Arbuthnot.

Strathfieldsaye: Dec. 12, 1839.

You are quite right in saying that Croker is entangled with Brougham, Burdett, &c., and I think you would be right in adding that, clever and able as he is, he is never to be depended on. In speaking of him the Duke has often said, 'He don't in his heart care a straw for Peel, or for me either. He comes to me when he thinks I can tell him something, and that is all.'

The Duke last year wrote to me that Croker would be most inconvenient to our party if he got into greater intimacy with Lord Brougham. I know that this intimacy has increased, and is now very great. They are eternally writing to each other.

Prince Albert says that no tailor in England can make a coat, and that the right time to dine is three o'clock. He is a metaphysician. At least such reading is his favourite study.

The Queen saw the Duchess of Gloucester the day before she notified her intention to the Privy Council. The Duchess asked whether she did not feel nervous. 'Not at all,' replied her Majesty. 'But,' added she, 'it had been a nervous thing to propose to Prince Albert.' 'What! did you propose to him?' asked the Duchess. 'To be sure I did,' said the Queen. 'He would never have presumed to take such a liberty as to propose to the Queen of England.'

Thus we see, as would say the Duke, we have a haughty little lady for our Sovereign.

Lord Ashley took up with much zeal the hope of making Protestantism the issue on which Conservatives should come into office.

Lord Ashley to Mr. Bonham.

(*Private.*)

St. Giles' House, Woodgate: Dec. 4, 1839.

Cast aside all other views, and let us endeavour to get the Government out on a *Protestant* point. We shall thus

combine the truths of religion (God be praised for it!) and the feelings of the country.

You see the Ministers are whining. I may say that I *know* the omission in the Queen's Speech was intentional.

It is not impossible that the Government will endeavour to give Prince Albert a most unnecessary and unwarrantable revenue. The present establishment of Windsor is ample for the Crown, be it married or single. I confess I dread the use that may be made of these large disposable funds. See what the country has paid and is still paying to Leopold.

The Prince should have a sufficiency of pocket money, and a fitting suite of equeries, but no more.

The growing strength of the Conservative party, and their exclusion from power solely on a question of the Royal Household, caused on their part impatience which almost forced upon their leaders an aggressive policy, and as the Session drew near Sir Robert Peel took counsel on this with his chief colleagues.

To the Duke of Wellington.

Drayton Manor: Dec. 15, 1839.

I think we must look forward to very strong feeling on the part of our friends in both Houses in favour of some hostile movement against the Government.

An actual decision upon our course to be taken now would be premature, but it will be advantageous that we should give early consideration to the course which it may be advisable to pursue.

There is a pretty general impression that the Government has barely a majority, if it be not in an actual minority, in the Commons. Such an impression would make it very difficult to avoid a trial of strength. Eager partisans might resolve on bringing it on, and might choose an unwise issue to decide it.

The questions for us to consider appear to me to be these: Shall there be a hostile movement against the Government? If so, what shall be the mode of attack?

What shall be the time and occasion for it? Shall it be a concerted movement on the part both of Lords and Commons?

Suppose it were decided that a motion should be made, decisive, if successful, of the fate of the Government, or at least of the dissolution of Parliament, I doubt whether the earliest opportunity and the most direct motion would not be the preferable course.

The most direct motion would be a declaration that the Government did not possess the confidence of Parliament. It would be the simplest and most intelligible, most satisfactory to the eager partisans, and at the same time less pregnant with any embarrassing committals on doubtful points of policy than almost any other motion that could be devised.

Suppose it should be considered advisable to make such a motion, there can be no doubt, I apprehend, that it should be made at once, but whether as a separate motion or by way of amendment to the Address might admit of question.

The Speech will announce the marriage—the Address will be full of congratulations. The policy of late years on the part of all Governments and all Oppositions has been to avoid the occasion of conflict on the Address. It might be considered ungracious to depart from this course in the case of an Address congratulating a Queen Regnant on her marriage.

On these points, and on the policy, if any motion be advisable, of a joint action on the part of Lords and Commons, I shall be most anxious to have your opinion. I shall avoid expressing any, or indeed forming any decision, until after I have had the advantage of full communication with you.

From the Duke of Wellington.

Strathfieldsaye: Dec. 18, 1839.

It may be necessary to attack the Government upon certain subjects; it may be desirable upon others; and the conduct of our friends may force upon us that course.

I will discuss the question solely in relation to the House of Commons. The House of Lords ought to take the course which will be most convenient to our leaders in the Commons.

I don't think it is desirable that you should have at this moment the option even of taking charge of the Government.

Opposition to the measures of the Administration, or a censure moved and carried upon any subject on which it may be necessary for the Conservative party to declare their opinion, may oblige the Ministers to resign their offices. They may be forced to the adoption of the same measure by the defection of their own friends and supporters. Even the option coming to you in that case would be inconvenient.

The Household would occasion the same difficulties as in May last. These and other difficulties would not so much signify if the Ministers themselves should discover that they cannot go on, on account of their own internal disputes and the defection of friends. But if they should be forced to resign by opposition to their measures, or above all by a censure moved by our party, we must make up our minds to take the Government, or leave it to be scrambled for.

I have already observed that we may be under the necessity of taking a course which will lead to the dissolution of the Administration. But we must never lose sight of the consequences, for which I don't think our sanguine friends are prepared.

If we are to make an attack upon the measures of the Government, there can be no doubt that the proper mode of proceeding would be a declaration of want of confidence, or a motion for a Committee on the state of the nation. Either might occasion the discussion of every topic; the latter certainly would. But considering the difficulties which prevail everywhere, and upon which we cannot say that we are all agreed, I should doubt the expediency of an extended discussion upon the state of affairs.

I happen to know a good deal upon some of these questions. I know that it is not very difficult to find cause for what has been done, and what is doing, and what is intended.

But the first step towards any improvements must be an increase of the naval and military establishments of the country, so as to render these more adequate to perform the services which may be required.

These are the objects which in my opinion require an augmentation of our force—the settlement of the Canadian question, including that of the frontier of the Province of Maine; the settlement of that which is understood in Europe as the Eastern question—I mean the relations between the Porte and the Pacha of Egypt, including French pretensions upon Candia; the operations of the French in Africa; their views upon Minorca; the questions upon French blockades on the West Coast of Africa, at Buenos Ayres, and on the coast of South America.

As connected with the increase of our forces, measures must be considered for rendering the ordinary revenue of the country more nearly equal to its peace expenditure.

With these must be considered the state of our monetary system, and the difficulties in which the internal trade of the country is so constantly involved, in consequence of the measures which it is so frequently necessary to adopt in order to rectify the exchanges.

These are the difficulties which we shall have to overcome connected with the state of affairs abroad, and in our North American colonies.

But let us consider for a moment the questions affecting our position at home.

Ireland.—The law must be carried into execution, and property and life must be protected in that country.

Scotland.—What is to be done with the Church question in Scotland? But there is in Scotland, as well as in England and Ireland, a most important question for consideration, the operation of the Combination Laws, and the effect which their repeal has had, not only upon manu-

factures and trade, but upon the security of persons and property in the country, and upon its general political state.

Then Education in England and Wales. What is to be done upon that subject?

All these questions will press for discussion and decision. We differ with the existing Government upon all of them. We shall have to declare our course upon them.

I have left out of consideration the state of affairs in Central Asia, and on the Indus, which, however, must eventually come under our consideration. But I am convinced that those who are so clamorous to turn out the Government, are not prepared for the adoption of the measures which must be adopted in order to enable any honest man to perform his duty, who may undertake to conduct the Government.

I have always been ready—by some thought too ready—to serve the Crown, if my services should be called for, and should be necessary. But there is a great difference between that readiness, which I feel now as strongly as ever I did, and the volunteering in a course of measures which are to have for their object to force the Administration to resign, and the Sovereign to call for the services of others, myself included.

I might possibly have less feeling upon the subject if the labouring oar in any sense—whether of responsibility, of intercourse with and communication with the Sovereign and the Palace, in Parliament, in society, among the party, or elsewhere—were to fall upon me.

But I know that it must be imposed upon another, and that nothing that I can do can relieve him in his difficulties. And I think that I ought as an honest man to declare what I think ought to be done in the case supposed, and to authorise you to communicate my opinion to those to whom you may think proper.

WELLINGTON.

P.S.—I quite concur with you that no question of censure ought to be moved upon the Address, although it

might be convenient in debate on the Address to advert to some of the topics on which a difference of opinion is felt.
W.

To the Duke of Wellington.

Drayton Manor : Dec. 20, 1839.

I thank you most sincerely for the very full and very able development of your views on the important point on which I consulted you. Every part of your letter deserves the fullest consideration.

I wrote to three persons at the time I wrote to you, the only three whom I thought it advisable to communicate with in the first instance (Aberdeen being so far away), Stanley, Graham, and Goulburn. I did not seek to influence them by any expression of opinion on my own part, but to direct their immediate attention to matters on which we might be forced to take an early decision, and to elicit the free expression of their own unbiassed opinions. Inclosed is the answer which I have received from Graham.

Whatever we may ultimately determine upon, there will be great advantage in fully considering, before the time for decision comes, our position, and the consequences, so far as we can judge, of the several lines of conduct which it may be open to us to pursue.

(Enclosure.)

From Sir James Graham.

Netherby : Dec. 18, 1839.

In the present state of affairs I should gladly place implicit reliance on the wisdom of you and the Duke of Wellington, and be content to adopt any course which you and he concurred in advising. I think that this confidence is due to the leaders of a party, on whom the great weight of responsibility is thrown, and unless it be freely given and generously extended in the most trying circumstances, nothing decisive can be achieved, and no danger can be averted.

You kindly ask for my opinion on several points, and I will state it freely.

The first question is, Shall we attack the Government at once on the opening of the Session?

The constant legitimate object of an Opposition is the overthrow of an Administration which they consider bad, and hope to replace by a better. If they doubt whether they can so replace it, their opposition is modified; if their hope is confident that they can so replace it, no opportunity should be lost of attacking and routing the enemy. Much will depend on the numbers which we can bring to a division in the present House of Commons, and on the effect which a dissolution under the existing Administration would produce in our ranks.

Without Radical aid, or the support of Grey Pouters, on which we should not rely, and to catch which our policy should not bend, I doubt whether we could carry a vote of want of confidence. But we should run it so near as to give the Ministers no advantage by our repulse, and if there be any secession from their side, or any backwardness in supporting them, we certainly should succeed.

Then as to a dissolution. I believe the country to be ripe for it, and in the present state of the public mind I do not much fear the influence of this Administration; and I am disposed after some research to believe that a Parliament would be returned with which you could confront the Government.

Such being my opinion on the cardinal point of numbers, I look to the state of the party, both within and without the walls of Parliament. To bring this great body together has been an immense effort; to have restrained its eager haste so long has been the triumph of discretion and good management; to hold it together much longer without a direct and vigorous attack on the Government I believe to be impossible; and the dissolution of this party would be the consummation of every evil which it was formed to resist. It will survive defeat, it will rally after

disappointment in active warfare; but the dangers are so urgent, the antipathies so strong, hope deferred so sickening, that if the desire of attack be balked, universal discouragement will ensue, and the party will melt away. Anything almost is better than this. I have already said that attack is the sound principle of Opposition, that I see nothing in the peculiar circumstances of the present moment to restrain it, and my opinion therefore is in favour of a motion.

The nature of the motion and the time for making it are the next two questions.

As to the nature of the motion I entirely concur in your reasoning. The more direct in its avowed object, and the more general in its terms, the better will it serve our purpose. The Crown and the nation will both understand it; there can be no mistake; and no pledge as to future policy is given, or implied. Moreover, a general declaration of want of confidence, without concert or compromise, fairly includes the vote of every man who thinks that the time has arrived when the Administration should be changed.

I think, therefore, that a resolution declaring 'that the present advisers of the Crown do not possess the confidence of this House'—or the precise words used by John Russell, when he announced the resignation of the Ministry in May last, on his Jamaica Bill—would be best suited to the occasion.

Next as to the time. A moment should not be lost, after the meeting of Parliament, in giving notice of this motion, if it is to be made. A debate on the Address in such circumstances is highly inexpedient, because it embraces every topic of foreign and domestic policy, and in your position, till the fate of the Government is determined, it would be unwise to enter on this field. If your notice be given for an early day, and before the Address has been moved, I think you may convert the Address into a unanimous congratulation on the marriage, and avoid a general debate.

Every effort will be made by Ministers to force on a debate on the Address, with the view of blunting the edge of the attack on the subsequent motion. In our House this may be checked, where the notice will have been given : in the Lords it may not be so easy, with the evil spirit of Brougham abroad there, unless a similar motion be given there also.

And here arises your last question, Shall a simultaneous motion be made in the Lords ?

I confess that I am always disposed to regard the House of Lords more as a shield of defence than as a weapon of attack. And, if we failed in the Commons but succeeded in the Lords, the vote in the Upper House would be ineffectual, its defensive power would be diminished, and some pretext might be given for a creation of peers, or some other violent measure. If a full debate on the Address in the Lords could be avoided, and if Brougham would remain tolerably quiet till the sense of the House of Commons had been taken on your motion, I should say that it was wise to keep the House of Lords in reserve, and to make no move there, until the result of the attack in the Commons had been ascertained. Something must depend on the feeling and temper of the more eager peers, who may not think it consistent with the independent dignity of the Upper House, in a great crisis of public affairs, to wait on the decision of the Commons. But if this feeling do not exist, or can be controlled, the safest way of playing the game would be to keep the Lords in hand. Our majority there is notorious ; their vote in accordance with the House of Commons would follow as a matter of course ; their vote in collision with the Commons would not be decisive, and might be very dangerous. .

On the whole, then, my opinion is in favour of a substantive motion of want of confidence, to be made in the Commons in the first instance, and not in the Lords.

I will not enter on the Scotch Church question, but it has assumed an angry aspect of extreme danger.

To Mr. Arbuthnot.

Drayton Manor : Dec. 20, 1839.

I heard from the Duke this morning. I think his letter an excellent one, full of the highest and most honourable feelings, and of the soundest good sense. If I could say more I would.

With respect to the two very natural questions which the Duke put to you, I could have no difficulty in giving an answer.

I should feel great difficulty, while continuing in public life, in declining, under any possible circumstances, the attempt to form a Government, if no conditions were attached to that attempt which I thought it dishonourable to accept.

But if I were a party to a motion, not rendered necessary by some specific act or measure of the Government, but a motion of voluntary hostility intended to displace a Government, I should feel absolutely bound in honour to abide by the consequences of the success of that motion, and, if called upon, to attempt the formation of a Government.

So much for the first question. As to the second, I must also say that I am not prepared to recede from any one principle upon which the Duke and I acted in last May, with regard to the Household, and that I should consider it impossible to accede to the terms on which office was then proposed to us.

I have always felt that my adherence to that principle might be a very good reason why the Queen should decline my services, but I do not think the consideration of my personal position in that respect, or the probability that no other terms would be proposed by the Queen, should very materially influence my parliamentary conduct.

I must not assume as a certain fact that the former terms would be insisted on, and even if I were to assume that, I must still oppose the Government, at the hazard of

displacing them, on every material point on which I thought the Government in the wrong.

Then comes the distinction between a voluntary act of general hostility directed against the Government and the resistance to an individual objectionable measure. This is a perfectly just and practicable distinction to make in the House of Lords, when the Government is in a minority in that House, with a majority in the Commons. But will it be a practicable distinction, suppose the Government to be in a minority in both Houses?

Will not the very circumstance of being able to command a majority in the Commons on a vital question, coupled with the eagerness and impatience of friends, leave you the choice between two alternatives: the one, the displacing of the Government; the other, the dissolution of your own party, through the dissatisfaction of office seekers, and the disappointment of eager though personally disinterested partisans?

I do not think the Duke's letter by any means excludes the full consideration of the evils which might arise from the occurrence of the second of these alternatives.

I wrote to Stanley, Graham, and Goulburn, at the same time I wrote to the Duke, and to them only, and in the strictest confidence, suggesting the points for consideration which I mentioned to the Duke.

I think Stanley's opinions are very much in concurrence with those expressed by the Duke. Graham is more inclined to the policy, on account of the position of the party, of hostile measures. I have not heard from Goulburn.

From the Duke of Wellington.

Dec. 23, 1839.

We all agree that no amendment should be moved upon the Address. We likewise agree that if a motion should be made, it should be one declaring a want of confidence in the Administration. I agree with Sir James Graham that such a motion should not be made in the House of Lords,

unless we should be certain, or at least think, that there is a chance of its being carried in the House of Commons.

I think that I can answer for the House of Lords taking any course that may be deemed desirable.

Where we do not agree is in thinking it desirable to proceed immediately to make this attack upon the Government.

I concur in opinion with you, that you cannot avoid to endeavour to form a Government, and to carry on the same upon your own principles, if the occasion should offer.

But I don't think it desirable that you should have the offer. This is an opinion partly founded upon what I have always thought of the Reform and its effects, aggravated as difficulties resulting from the Reform have been by the policy of the Government in all branches, in the last year.

These are difficulties which must be met if necessary. But—seeing them as I do, and having already had experience of them, and knowing that those of which I had experience will be still further aggravated by the political occurrences since 1834–5, and above all by our being governed by a Sovereign who is herself the head of the adverse party—I cannot but think that if I had to decide upon this question, as upon one in war, I should avoid, if possible, to take any course which should force upon you the occasion to decide to undertake the Government for some time longer.

I am sensible that the state of the country is improved—it may be more so than I am aware of—and I see that Sir James Graham writes with confidence of your being able to carry on a Government. But this is a point upon which I am not competent to give an opinion. Nor am I on the necessity of making a motion at a particular time, in order to keep the party together.

Political parties are at times very unreasonable, and I must admit that my task in this respect is easy indeed in comparison with that imposed upon you.

You have had my opinion in detail upon all these points in my former letter, as well as here.

But if it should be thought necessary to meet all the difficulties, and to make the motion, I will concur willingly, and will act accordingly, and will take the part in the House of Lords which may be deemed desirable, and will engage to prevail upon a majority of that House to take the same course.

From Sir James Graham.

Netherby : Dec. 26, 1839.

By Stanley's desire I return the enclosed letter from the Duke direct to you.

I have so little confidence in my own judgment and such deference for his, that I stagger when I read that, 'if he had to decide upon this question of attack, as upon one in war, he would avoid, if possible, the decisive course.' This is the strongest possible expression of opinion from one who never failed to seize the right moment, and whose triumphs are less signalised by enterprise than by the exemplary patience with which he watched the opportunity, and reduced the chances of success almost to certainty.

The reasons, however, do not appear to me so strong as the opinion. The question put on the passing of the Reform Act, 'How is the King's Government to be conducted?' naturally leaves a gloomy foreboding and a bias of despondency on the mind which foresaw such irreparable evil in so great a change. Yet in six years you are at the head of an Opposition which numbers 318 men who have not bent the knee to Baal; and you are sure of a majority in the next Parliament, true to Conservative principles, notwithstanding the ten-pound constituency, and although the Crown is hostile, and the influence of the Government is opposed to you.

The fatal circumstance of the alliance between the Crown and Democracy would be a reason for delay, if any just expectation could be entertained that forbearance and persuasion might dissolve a union which, if it continue long, must destroy the balance of our mixed form of Government.

I have no reliance on these means ; my hope—it is not confident—rests on a majority to be obtained in the House of Commons, which may sustain you in an honest effort to save the Crown against its will, and to avert the evils of the headlong course which hurries us to ruin.

The Duke observes, that I write in the confidence of your being able to carry on a Government with a new Parliament. I ventured only to state my belief, that if a vote of the present House of Commons drove Ministers to an immediate dissolution, a Parliament would be returned, with which you could conduct the Government. This belief mainly rests on the assurances and reports of the friends whom I have consulted, and whom I considered most competent to form a sound judgment from their knowledge of facts. Fremantle and Bonham will have given you the surest information on this point, which is after all the key of the position ; for with a majority in the House of Commons all things are possible ; without it, nothing is safe.

As to the wishes of the party, their eager haste and impatience of delay, you will have heard more than I. But it is impossible, with such passions excited and such interests at stake, that a powerful and united Opposition should not pant to measure its strength with a Government which it almost outnumbers, and which is weak as well as reckless.

Beyond all doubt the difficulty will be extreme, with which in government you must grapple. The dangers are certain, the event precarious ; but the question always returns, Will delay diminish the danger and the difficulty ? or will it not rather impair the means of overcoming them ?

The scheme of governing in Opposition cannot be durable. The power lasts as long as the hope of succeeding to office endures ; but extinguish the hope, and the power vanishes. The leaders do not fly ; but the troops are disbanded, the camp is broken up, and the nation is disheartened. On the other hand, from the hostility of the

Crown, the lukewarmness of disappointed followers, the imprudence of some, the insubordination of others, amidst innumerable conflicting difficulties, your effort to conduct the Government may fail. But it will be a manly effort, a noble exertion, in which success will be crowned with glory, and in which failure will be no disgrace. Be satisfied in your own mind, which course is most conducive to the welfare and safety of the country; and be the event what it may, you never will regret its adoption.

As for me, to the best of my humble means and ability, I will strenuously support the line which you decide to take, for I have the utmost confidence in your wisdom and virtue, and I may be allowed to add that I feel also the sincere attachment of a friend.

To Mr. Goulburn.

Dec. 26, 1839.

Fremantle will send on to you two letters which I have had from Stanley and Graham, which you will of course consider strictly private.

I shall also send you one from the Duke, written with great clearness and ability, very desponding as to the future prospects of the country, and the means of brightening them.

From the Duke of Wellington.

Dec. 23, 1839.

Sir James Graham adverts to questions in relation to the Church of Scotland, I don't know whether you have attended to these.

If the changes proposed should be authorised by an alteration of the law, the clergy of the Church of Scotland will become a most powerful political body in this State.

I have not much confidence in the course that will be taken by any newly constituted political body whose existence and power must depend upon the popular voice. Scotland will become worse than Ireland, inasmuch as its despotic theocracy will be established by law.

To the Duke of Wellington.

Drayton Manor : Dec. 26, 1839.

In your first letter you alluded to the feud in Scotland respecting 'the voluntary system' in the Church, and I was not sure whether you referred to that feud which exists as to the compulsory maintenance of an Established Church, or to that much more serious one, which has latterly arisen, as to the supremacy of the Church Courts in Scotland over the civil tribunals of the country. Your second letter refers to the latter question.

I have paid great attention to this, and from having had much intercourse with the Church of Scotland, from administering as Secretary of State the Church patronage in Scotland belonging to the Crown, and taking an interest in the question on that account, am familiar with all that has recently passed.

I view this question with the utmost apprehension, and foresee a very serious schism in the Scottish Church as the probable consequence of it.

Probably when you wrote you had not read the account of the latest and most violent proceedings of the Commission of Assembly, which has actually suspended—or rather tried to suspend, for the Civil Courts have interfered—seven ministers of the Church from their pastoral functions on account of their adherence to the law of the land, as laid down by the Scotch Courts, and confirmed on appeal by the House of Lords.

I believe a great body of the Scotch laity, and particularly of the higher ranks, will secede from the Church of Scotland, rather than submit to its intolerable pretensions.

From the Duke of Wellington.

Strathfieldsaye : Jan. 3, 1840.

I have received your letter of December 31, and return all those which you have sent me. I don't like to discuss the questions to which they relate, because I don't under-

stand the state of the modern House of Commons, which is the principal topic.

I know what the Government of this country was, by the aid of the unreformed House of Commons. I had some experience of it in 1834—5 by the aid of the reformed House, and under the auspices of a Sovereign favourable to and anxious to retain in his service his Administration. The real difficulties of the country were then considerable, but trifling in comparison with what they are at present. Indeed, I have reason to believe that they are greater than has been contemplated by any one not in office.

We closed Parliament last Session with a deficient revenue. I understand that it is now admitted that the deficiency from the Post Office will be a million, that the estimate for the Marriage is 100,000*l.*, and of a deficiency of supply 70,000*l.* for the Ordnance, and 130,000*l.* for the Navy, compared with last year; to which must be added the expense of postage for all the offices, including that for the collection of the revenue. This cannot come to less than 200,000*l.* So that here is already a deficient revenue to the amount of 1,500,000*l.* without the addition of a man to the Army.

The calculations of gain upon a dissolution are very promising, but nobody can rely upon them. Then we have to meet all these difficulties in the service of a Sovereign who is herself the head of the party whose business it will be to aggravate them.

If we must do it, let us lay our shoulders to the wheel. There is no man who will work more willingly or risk more than myself. But let us act with our eyes open, and see the difficulties and dangers for ourselves as well as for the country.

Sir James Graham very reasonably asks, What shall we gain by delay? We have gained much since 1834—5. I contend that we shall continue to gain.

But the misfortunes and disgraces of misgovernment, of the sacrifice of the interests and honour of the country, are not ours. We shall not by failure accelerate the

moment of revolution and destruction, as we certainly shall if we are in too great a hurry to seize the administration of affairs, which we shall not have the strength to carry on as in our own opinion we ought.

This is my opinion. But I am ready for anything which members of the House of Commons may think proper to undertake. It appears to me that Fremantle's and all these letters are written in the tone in which they would have been written if no alteration had been made in the working of the Constitution of the country. This is certainly not a correct view of our position.

On Jan. 27 the Government were defeated by 104 votes on the provision to be made for Prince Albert, Sir Robert Peel supporting an amendment to reduce it. In commenting on this he refers to Ministers having advised the Queen to be content with a smaller sum, but not having had courage to press their counsel.

To Mr. Arbuthnot.

Jan. 28, 1840.

You will have seen that we were enabled by an immense majority last night to place in the hands of the Government the means of justifying the soundness of the advice which they had given to their Royal Mistress in favour of 30,000*l.* as compared with 50,000*l.*

This division will inform the Queen that she must not place too much reliance on the forbearance of the Conservative party, and must not calculate upon them as instruments in the hands of Whig Ministers, on questions on which the Radical supporters of those Ministers abandon them.

There was a wonderful degree of spontaneous uniformity of opinion in favour of 30,000*l.* among our party.

The Duke is in great force, and behaved admirably about our motion of to-night.

From Mr. Arbuthnot.

Jan. 29, 1840.

Many thanks for your most acceptable note. It is not often nowadays that one has to rejoice for divisions in the House of Commons, but what passed on Monday does give me real pleasure. It will be a useful lesson to the Queen. I have again heard this morning that up to the very last moment, knowing that they should be beaten, the Ministers implored her to give way, and to be satisfied with 30,000*l.*, but that she was obdurate.

The Whig Ministers have disgraced and injured themselves by proposing to Parliament what they had advised against, and what they knew to be wrong. And Lord John, by his insinuations against the loyalty of the Conservatives, behaved most indecorously, and showed a pitiful loss of temper.

On Jan. 31 the House of Commons divided on a vote of want of confidence, but the Whig Ministry escaped defeat by a majority of twenty-one.

Later in the year differences of judgment on questions of the day again threatened a rupture between the Conservative leaders in the Lords and Commons.

Memorandum by Sir Robert Peel.

In the course of the Session 1840, important differences of opinion took place in the Conservative party, and chiefly between the Duke of Wellington and myself, in respect to the Irish Municipal Corporation Bill, and to the Bill for the Union of the Canadas.

The accompanying papers refer to these subjects. I place the papers together, partly because some of the enclosed letters refer to the two subjects, partly because the difference of opinion on each of the two subjects had its influence on the other. They came under consideration at the same period of the Session in the House of Lords.

To understand the position of the Conservative party in the Session of 1840 in reference to the Irish Municipal Bill, reference must be had to the discussions in Parliament from the beginning of 1837, so far as records accessible to all are concerned. These records are very material in this respect, that they contain the declarations publicly made by the leaders of the Conservative party as to the course which they meant to pursue, and as to the conditions which they required as preliminaries to the consideration of the Irish Municipal Bill.

So far as concerns the real motives for the course which was taken in 1837—the reasons for our change of policy in 1837, as compared with the preceding year—the packet of confidential papers marked ‘Irish Municipal Bill 1837’ [see p. 336] contains everything in my possession, and probably much fuller information on the whole than can elsewhere be found.

There were letters occasionally written by me during the progress of the discussion in 1837, of which I may have no copies, for I rarely had time to take copies of the letters which I wrote. But I believe a very full, and certainly the most complete account of the transactions I refer to, will be found in that packet.

It will be seen that we were threatened with disunion, that there was a marked difference between the views of the House of Lords and the House of Commons, and that our minority in the Commons against the Government was comparatively small, and was decreasing in numbers.

My opinion was very strong upon one point, namely, that it would be discreditable to the party and dishonourable to turn out the Government upon their policy, and then adopt that policy, or anything like it, when ourselves in Government.

I stated distinctly that I would be no party to this course; that the time was come for reconsidering the whole question, for deciding whether we would continue resistance to the re-establishment of Irish Corporations on popular principles after the extinction of the existing corporations;

that if we did continue that resistance, we ought to avow that it was not a temporary resistance, but one offered upon principle, or at least upon permanent grounds; and that in that case our course if in Government ought to conform with our course in Opposition.

On the other hand, if we were disposed to think that resistance could not be permanently maintained; that there was greater evil in continual conflict between the two Houses on such a question than in conceding Irish Corporations; that there were other measures which, if passed simultaneously, or exacted as previous conditions, would abate our objections to the reconstitution of Irish Corporations; then in my opinion we ought frankly to state to the Government and to the public what our views were, to allow the Government the opportunity of considering whether they would adopt them or not.

If they would not adopt them, then I thought it would be perfectly consistent with honour that, after having frankly declared when in Opposition our course of policy, our reasons for withdrawing opposition to the principle of re-establishing Corporations in Ireland, and the conditions on which it was withdrawn, we should undertake the Government, and should act upon the principles thus previously avowed.

The Canadas.

The Union of the Canadas was recommended to the consideration of the two Houses of Parliament by a Message from the Throne on May 3, 1839.

Her Majesty declared her opinion 'that the future welfare of her subjects in Upper and Lower Canada would be promoted by the Union of the two Provinces.'

The House of Lords, in the answer to the Message, declared their readiness in general terms to give full consideration to the subject.

On August 23, 1839, Lord Lyndhurst, in his speech reviewing the business of the Session, observed that the measure called for by the state of the Canadas was the

second subject of recommendation in the Speech from the Throne, and proceeded thus: 'We all felt that nothing could be more pressing and more urgent than the necessity for taking that most important matter into consideration early in the Session. Every hour's delay we felt—and what has since occurred has confirmed the propriety of our opinion—added to the difficulty of the subject.'

The Act of 1838 remains in force until the first day of November 1840. On the expiry of the Act of 1838 the Constitutional Act of 1831 will revive, and Lower Canada will be subject in respect to its Government to all its provisions.

The Act of 1838, which suspended it, recites in its preamble—the expressions being modified on our suggestion—'that it is expedient to make *temporary* provision for the Government of Lower Canada, in order that Parliament may be enabled, after mature deliberation, to make permanent arrangements for the *Constitution* and Government of Lower Canada.'

With regard to Upper Canada, the duration of the present Provincial Parliament is limited, I believe, to the present year. There can, I apprehend, be no new Session of the Provincial Legislature of Upper Canada.

The consequence of rejecting the Bill now under consideration for the Union of the Provinces must therefore be a new election, and the assembly of a new Parliament in Upper Canada, and the passing of an Act in the present Session to provide for the Government of Lower Canada.

This Session cannot terminate without such an Act, or the revival of the Act of 1831.

Those who reject or delay the measure of Union should well consider the important and inevitable consequence of rejection or delay. They should consider who will undertake the carrying through of this provisional or permanent Act for the Government of Lower Canada.

If it is to be provisional and temporary, for what time shall it endure? What is the nature of the authority to

be established in Lower Canada? And, above all, with what object shall the Act be passed?

If with the view of ultimately providing for the Union of the two Provinces, is there any prospect that delay, and delay on such grounds, will contribute to the satisfactory adjustment of the question of Union?

If there is a decided and insuperable objection to the principle of Union, the consideration of time and circumstances is comparatively unimportant. But I am now supposing that there is not that objection, and that delay is sought for, not with the view of defeating and preventing Union, but of providing for a more satisfactory adjustment of the measure and its details.

Considering the question from this point of view, I cannot concur in the policy of delay. I cannot see the probability that it will promote the object sought to be attained by it.

Whatever construction may be placed on Lord Seaton's despatches, as an indication of his opinions on the principle of a Union, they are decisive, I think, on this point, that, if the measure is to be entertained at all, there can be no more favourable time than the present for the consideration of it. Lord Seaton says: 'It is evidently desired by the British portion of the population of Lower Canada, that the union of the Provinces should not be delayed.' And again: 'I have already stated that the population of British origin earnestly desire the Union, and that the Canadian French population are not so averse to the measure as they formerly were.'

Objections were made to the measure of Union last year on account of the unsettled state of the Provinces, and the danger of incursions from the United States upon the frontiers. The objections then taken were of a temporary nature, and seemed to imply that when the Queen's authority should be fully established, and tranquillity restored, there would be no insuperable obstacle in point of principle to the measure of Union.

It is not easy to declare with regard to any country—

still less of a country recently in a state of partial insurrection—that tranquillity is entirely and perfectly restored. But the recent statements of the Governors of the two Provinces would make it difficult to assign the disturbed or excited state of the Provinces as a reason against their union.

If these statements are correct, as I presume them to be, I cannot anticipate any more favourable period than the present (so far as public tranquillity and the absence of public excitement in the Canadas are concerned) for considering and deciding upon the policy of Union.

Upon reconsideration of the whole question, I adhere to the opinions I have expressed in the House of Commons. I see less danger in the measure of Union, proposed as it has been by the Crown after ample public notice, and assented to by all the colonial authorities, than in the rejection or the delay of the measure.

I cannot expect others, who take a different view of this question, to adopt my opinions. But I adhere to my own, and I cannot undertake any responsibility, should views adverse to mine be taken, and prevail.

ROBERT PEEL.

Whitehall: July 6, 1840.

The differences to which this memorandum refers had caused great anxiety to those who were aware of them, especially to Sir James Graham, who feared that they might end in disruption of the party, on the eve of acceding to power.

From Sir James Graham.

(*Private.*)

Grosvenor Place: June 9, 1840.

Certain accounts, which reached me last week, of the Duke's intentions respecting the Irish Municipal Bill and the Canada Bill so filled me with alarm, that I wrote to Arbutnot entreating him to come to London, in the hope that by his intervention, which is the surest and most easy channel of communication, the evils which I apprehended

might be averted. Arbuthnot came to Apsley House, and I saw him yesterday.

I stated to him fully and without reserve my impressions respecting the engagements mutually contracted, when we withdrew our proposal for the abolition of Corporations in Ireland, and pledged ourselves to the grant of municipal institutions on certain terms. I pointed out the injury sustained by many of our friends, who gave a reluctant consent to this change of policy, and whose wrongs would be grievous if we now deserted them by a second change. I enlarged on the evils of such vacillation, and I recalled your declaration made at the time, that you would either adhere to the plan of abolishing Corporations or consent to their establishment, but on one distinct understanding, that the line then taken was once for all, and that, either in Government or in Opposition, you could not depart from it.

I went also at length into the Canada question. I pointed out the weight of authority by which the Union was supported, the adoption of Lord Seaton's amendments on the plan of last year, the acquiescence both of Lord Seaton and of Sir George Arthur in the principle of the Union, so far at least as public evidence can be given of acquiescence, and above all the absence of any counter-project acceptable to the Canadians.

I did not omit to point out to Arbuthnot the fatal effect of misunderstanding on matters such as these, of primary importance; that on the eve of success, with power almost within our grasp, such differences, once disclosed, would destroy the Conservative party, and restore life and vigour to a Government which is now tottering to its fall; and I entreated him to lay before the Duke the various considerations which I had ventured to urge.

I received from him this morning the letter which I enclose.

I have hesitated about sending it to you, from the fear that, being unsatisfactory, it may do harm rather than good. But on the whole I think it right that you should

know exactly what has passed, and even though you should blame me for intermeddling, it is better that you should see at once how matters stand.

It is impossible not to make great allowances for the age and the infirmities of the Duke. He probably is aware that life with him is drawing to a close, and is honestly and naturally afraid lest concessions made by him against his judgment should lead to fatal results, which in the opinion of posterity might cast a shade over the lustre of his fame. Having nothing to gain and everything to lose, he is unwilling to run risks, and shrinks from the adoption of doubtful measures.

It may be said, he should have considered this before he became party to an engagement. I admit it, but still in his peculiar position he is exempt from the force of all ordinary rules, and the violation of his judgment at the expense, as he thinks, of his public duty would be a melancholy sacrifice at the close of life.

I have not seen him, but I collect from Arbuthnot that these are his feelings. Would it not be well that you should see him, and with respect to Canada at least endeavour to shape our course so as to avoid direct collision with him?

I understand that he will suspend any decisive operation against the Irish Municipal Bill, since he thinks, if Stanley's Registration Bill be carried, the danger of the concession would be very much diminished.

(Enclosure.)

Mr. Arbuthnot to Sir James Graham.

(Private.)

Apsley House: June 10, 1840.

Respecting the Corporation Bill, he certainly does not appear to think that he was bound to pass it, if it should be found that in its results it would affect the general interest of the Empire, and perhaps sever the connection between England and Ireland.

Upon the other subject, that of Canada, the Duke was positive and decided. He feels that the House of Lords has the power to throw out the Bill, and prevent the union

of the two Provinces; and foreseeing what would in his opinion be the certain consequence of such union, namely a separation from the mother country, he would not, at the close of a life passed with honour, take upon himself the grave responsibility of inflicting a heavy and fatal blow on England, when he knows that he has the power to prevent it.

I told him what you said of Lord Seaton's and of Sir G. Arthur's opinion, and of the wishes expressed in the Canadas. He said that he should not like to be quoted, but that he was positive both Lord Seaton and Sir G. Arthur deprecated the Union, and that whatever might have been the expressed wishes in the Provinces, he was sure that none such, by the loyal men, were now entertained, and that, as he believed, they had been tampered with by [the Governor] Mr. Poulett Thompson.

But, added the Duke, Peel had better see Lord Seaton, and ascertain from him what are his real sentiments, always, however, bearing in mind that Lord Seaton is in a delicate situation, and may be loath to speak in opposition to a Government by which he has been greatly rewarded.

I here observed to him that it was very unfortunate that he and Peel had not communicated upon this and other subjects, and he replied that he should always be ready to give him his opinion whenever it should be asked for.

If the Canada Bill for the Union of the Provinces should be sent up to the House of Lords, the Duke will do his utmost to have it thrown out.

I remarked to him that no counter-project had ever appeared, upon which he said, 'Oh, if it all depended on me, I would settle it at once. I would unite Montreal to the Upper Province, and I would govern the Lower Province for the present by a Governor and Council, as was the case till in 1791 that foolish Constitution was given, for which the French population have proved themselves unfit.'

There is only one other point on which I wish to say a few words.

From my regard and friendship for the two men, and from my intense anxiety for the well-doing of our party, it has been with the greatest sorrow that I find that between the Duke and Peel there is now no communication. With the exception of their recently meeting at dinner at Lord Wilton's, they have never seen each other since I was last in London. If they disliked each other, if even they did not highly esteem each other, it would be idle of me to say a word. But when I know that no cause whatever exists for this unfortunate separation, and when I am always entertaining the hope that at no distant period they may have to act together in Cabinet, I must say that not a moment ought to be lost in doing our utmost to bring them together again.

You will observe that the Duke said to me that if Peel asked his opinion about the Canada Bill, he would give it most readily. Had you not better tell this to Peel?

From Sir James Graham.

Grosvenor Place : June 14, 1840.

I received yesterday from Arbuthnot the enclosed letter, and I had a conversation with him. He appears to think that the Duke will pass the Irish Corporation Bill.

I understand that, though he regretted not having been consulted on the Canada Bill, he took in good part what occurred on the third reading [in the Commons] and expressed an expectation of some communication from you on that subject in the course of to-day.

I am disposed to hope that in the Irish Municipal Bill all will end well at last, and if, avoiding this subject, you would consent to call on him and state your views on the two Canada Bills, I am sure he would be gratified; for your silence grieves him much more than difference of opinion.

Moreover, you have insisted on two important changes in the Union Bill, both quite congenial to the wishes of the Duke; and with respect to the Clergy Reserves Bill, you

have not yet finally decided on the course which you intend to take.

I hope you will pardon me for venturing thus to press renewed communication with the Duke. I would not do so if I were not persuaded that the result would be satisfactory, and that the suspension of this confidential intercourse is most injurious, if not fatal, to our future prospects.

(Enclosure.)

Mr. Arbuthnot to Sir James Graham.

(Private.)

Apsley House: June 13, 1840.

I wish very much to see you. You know that I wrote to you that I would be in London, as you desired it, but that I was sure I could do no good.

I hope you will not now suppose that I say it from vanity, but in truth I believe that my presence here has been useful. It has been of use to let the Duke know what the leaders thought and wished, and this I have done in our several conversations. He has never actually said that he should take the course which was expected of him, but I have seen his mind turning by degrees to that course, and of this I was so convinced yesterday morning that I wrote to Lord Aberdeen that, in my opinion, he had better not talk to the Duke, as he had said to me he would, but leave it all now to the workings of his own mind.

I saw him go to the House of Lords without my having the slightest uneasiness, and Lord Aberdeen has told me, and Lord Lyndhurst says, that a more perfect or a more adroit or a more safe speech was never made.

Rely upon it, that the party will not break up. I did not share all your fears. I hoped and thought better things. What I have most lamented was that I could not get Peel to call on the Duke. I could not presume to press it, but I told him that in my opinion it would have the best effect.

As the Canada Bill was to be supported, I am rejoiced that it was carried by an immense majority. The Duke is

shaping his course so as not to be injurious if our Cabinet should be formed.

On the second reading of the Canada Bill (June 30) the Duke declared he could not vote for it, but recommended the Lords to let it go into Committee. On the motion for going into Committee (July 7) he described the Bill as 'a measure entirely dangerous to the stability of the Colonial Government,' but was content to entreat the Lords to take into their own hands the power of suspending its operations; and on the third reading (July 13), though he recorded in the journals a long protest, giving twenty-seven reasons against the Union, he advised the Peers to send the Bill to the Commons 'for further consideration.'

The Duke's intention to let the Bill pass seems to have been made known to Sir Robert Peel two days before the Committee. This appears from a note to Sir James Graham docketed by him 'The Duke has yielded.'

Sir Robert Peel to Sir James Graham.

Sunday evening: July 5, 1840.

I called on you this evening to show you the enclosed. I never varied in my opinion that the Duke would not, and could not, reject the Canada Bill, when they looked into the real state of the case.

It appears, however, that even at a later date it remained doubtful whether the Duke was prepared to lend his aid to bring a Conservative Government into power.

Sir James Graham to Mr. Arbuthnot.

(*Private.*)

Grosvenor Place: July 27, 1840.

I am grieved, but not surprised, by the substance of your letter. In the course of the late Session there has been much to regret, yet an open breach in the eye of the public has been avoided. The Duke on the Privilege and Canada Union questions was content to avow his difference of opinion without giving effect to it by an adverse vote,

and in the Irish Municipal Bill he has succeeded in carrying the amendments for which he contended. In the course of these operations a degree of estrangement and of mutual misunderstanding has arisen, which I deeply deplore. But I cannot believe that it is of a permanent and irreconcilable character, especially when I remember that all the public grounds of difference are removed.

The Privilege question is settled, the Canadas are united, the Clergy reserves are secured, the Irish Municipal Bill is settled by terms dictated by the Duke, the Education question is adjusted, the plan of the Church Commission is carried into effect, and three millions of new taxes have been imposed by our political adversaries. The Regency also has been determined by the Duke, in concert with his friends in both Houses, in a manner most agreeable to the wishes and feelings of the Queen ; and I should say, if we could henceforth but agree and act cordially together, that several of the great difficulties in the way of a permanent Conservative Government were removed, and that our opponents are weaker than ever, having no rallying point left ; except agitation for a new Reform Bill, which is a second revolution within eight years, by no means in accordance with the wishes of the community ; and agitation for a repeal of the Corn Laws, on which their own party is divided.

I cannot contemplate a Conservative Government without the active aid and co-operation of the Duke of Wellington, and though he may be dissatisfied with Peel's recent conduct, yet approving his general principles, and acknowledging his integrity and moral worth, he will not, if the necessity should occur, refuse to act with a body of gentlemen entitled to his confidence and support in a great crisis of public affairs, on account of a passing difference, the causes of which are practically at an end.

I have formed a different estimate of the Duke's magnanimity, and of his devotion to the interests of his country.

My belief is that great events are at hand. I doubt

whether the peace of Europe can be preserved, and I am sure that this feeble Government cannot restore peace if it be broken. I am equally certain that the greatest conqueror in the world, if his life be spared to the nation which he saved, will be expected by all mankind to take a leading share in the management of affairs, where danger is imminent and difficulties are pressing.

New events will give rise to fresh impulse, and let the past be forgotten, except as teaching the lesson of the evils which want of constant intercourse between leaders cannot fail to produce. And if mutual friends do their duty, and honestly endeavour to assuage and not to aggravate angry feelings, I will by no means despair, but trust implicitly to the natural cohesion of common principles and common objects of the present kind.

I hope you will not countenance for one moment the idea of a Conservative Government without the Duke. Then indeed, if formed, it could not stand a week.

CHAPTER XVI.

1840-41.

Wellington and Peel in close Alliance—The Household Question adjusted—Defeat of Ministers on Sugar—Vote of No Confidence—Dissolution—General Election—Conservative Gains—Church Question in Scotland—Renewed Vote of No Confidence—The Whigs resign—The Queen sends for Peel.

IN the winter of 1840 there was a pleasing growth of friendly intercourse between the Duke of Wellington and Sir Robert Peel, due partly to the good offices of Arbuthnot, who deemed it the one chief service he could render to his party and to the country, to draw together these two great leaders of men, and to keep them on those terms of cordial co-operation which expressed their truest selves.

From Mr. Arbuthnot.

Worsley Hall: Nov. 6, 1840.

While I was at Drayton I wrote to the Duke of Wellington, and I had much pleasure in telling him that your opinion and his greatly coincided in respect to the present state of public affairs. I added other things which I knew would give him pleasure.

I have received an answer which I should like to send you. I am sure it will please you. I don't much fancy ever offering advice, but I can't help telling you that if it should suit you, before Parliament meets, to communicate with him personally, it will, I am very sure, delight him exceedingly.

I was last year with the Duke when you did thus communicate with him, and most eagerly did he sit down to answer your letter. Personal communication between

you and him was not quite so necessary while I was at Walmer, for I always took care to keep you as well informed as I could. It would not only be of incalculable advantage to know precisely each other's sentiments, but it would also be of the greatest use as tending to keep the party in order, and all well together.

The Duke of Wellington to Mr. Arbuthnot.

Walmer Castle : Nov. 2, 1840.

I am much obliged to you for your most satisfactory letter from Sir Robert Peel's.

It drew from me the repetition of the remark which I had frequently made on former occasions, that Sir Robert Peel and I lived in parts of the country distant from each other, that our several pursuits kept us separate, that I was in the House of Lords and he in the House of Commons, and that we had but little communication; but that it generally turned out, when the opinion formed by each separately came to be compared with that of the other, the two were found to agree almost precisely. This is the case at present.

I have come to my conclusions by a long knowledge, and much discussion of events with Foreign Ministers, and it is wonderful how they concur with those of Sir Robert Peel.

To Mr. Arbuthnot.

Whitehall : Nov. 9, 1840.

You may rely upon it that nothing in private life gives me half so much satisfaction as communicating freely and unreservedly with the Duke of Wellington.

In the multiplicity of grave questions which our condition at home and our complicated relations with the whole world are perpetually offering for solution, and when public men are not forced to agreement by being actually in office together, they may occasionally differ on isolated matters of policy. If they are not in the same House of Parliament, they occasionally view—sometimes are almost compelled to view—the same questions from a different

position, and in a different light. But if the disagreement is merely occasional, and on isolated questions, and above all if it is really an honest one, if there is no lurking motive for it, it will not diminish their feeling of mutual respect, or their cordial co-operation in the great and general system of policy internal and external.

You may depend upon it that I shall not commit myself to any course of proceeding without full previous communication with the Duke. I do not mean only absolute committal, but that sort of vague talking in which people sometimes indulge before they are half informed—before the time is come for decision—and which afterwards hampers them, and practically influences their impressions.

Sir Robert Wilson was here yesterday full of alarming reports from Paris, Prussia raising her establishments to 500,000 men, the Government certain to be in a minority, every prospect of immediate war on the Rhine, and revolution in France, and so forth. He is one of those that live on such speculations, and are never easy unless they can make you believe that you are on the eve of some miraculous explosion. The accounts from Paris of to-day seem very satisfactory, so far as the Chamber of Deputies is concerned, and quite at variance with part of Sir Robert's information.

The best thing that can happen for Louis Philippe, for France, and for the peace of the world, is to convince the mind of France (if that be possible) that other Powers are prepared for her, and that she will be signally punished if she wantonly provokes them. If Louis Philippe could venture to make an honest speech to his Chambers, it should run thus:

'I rejoice to be enabled to inform you that, while the other Powers of Europe have no hostile views with regard either to the territory or the independence of France, they are at the same time in that state of naval and military preparation which enables them to despise the violence and menaces of the war faction in France, and to preclude

the hope of successful aggression on our part. I advise you, therefore, not to make yourselves ridiculous by mere bravado, and, as you cannot succeed by dishonest violence, to set the example to Europe of returning to a peace establishment, and try to establish your character by being quiet.'

I have been very confident from the first that—with the aid of an assassin, the 'Marseillaise,' and the brutal violence of the Jacobin press—Louis Philippe would be able to rally round him a peace party, out of sheer alarm for their own safety in case of war.

From Mr. Arbuthnot.

Woodford: Nov. 19, 1840.

I was sure that your letter of the 9th would give pleasure to the Duke, and the answer which I have received will give, I trust, equal satisfaction to you.

He says 'that nothing could be more satisfactory to him than what you had written; that he had always found you, as you describe yourself, most ready to communicate with him; that the truth is that you are in the House of Commons and he in the House of Lords, and that constant communication upon every particular is impossible, and can only be resorted to when the business in both Houses requires communication, or is likely to clash.'

He then says 'that he has the misfortune of being deaf, particularly in a meeting such as is held for consultation on the mode of proceeding in Parliament, in which meeting it is not unusual for many to talk at the same time. He don't doubt,' he says, 'but that you and those who act with you would be glad to see him at all such meetings, but that owing to his deafness he should not hear all that is said, and he is therefore useless at them. But he must say that he has always been ready to talk to you, as you have also been to him, and (as he told me in a former letter) he generally, indeed always, found that without any previous communication you and he are upon the same ground.'

Here is the part of his letter referring to that which I communicated to him from you.

‘He considers our affairs in a very critical state. He does not see how the Government can extricate themselves from their difficulties, nor does he think that we could improve the matter much, if these Ministers were to cut and run.’

‘The truth is,’ he says, ‘that we require to be governed. We want an Administration which will not seek popularity, except in the strict performance of its whole duty as Government. But that is what the country,’ he observes, ‘will not have, and will not support. We must do the best we can, therefore, and prevent as much mischief as possible, whether to arise from the existing Ministers, or from our own adherents, or from the Radicals, and at all events delay it.’

By copying the Duke’s letter I have saved you the trouble of deciphering writing which is very difficult to make out when written in haste.

It is very true that the Duke is exceedingly deaf, when more than one person speaks at the same time. He tells me that ‘he has often come from your meeting without knowing the result you have come to.’ I am sure, therefore, it is very desirable that you should see him alone, when matters of importance are to be decided.

To the Duke of Wellington.

(*Private.*)

Whitehall: Nov. 12, 1840.

Lord Francis Egerton expressed a wish that I should send you the accompanying letters from my boy, who is off the coast of Syria, as a midshipman in the ‘Princess Charlotte.’

I did not think it likely that you would be much interested by the reports of naval operations of a boy of fifteen. But as two very distinguished captains of the navy have told me that they got a clearer conception of our proceedings after reading these letters than they had before, I have determined to send you the letters.

To Mr. Goulburn.

Dec. 6, 1840.

I can hardly justify on any reasonable grounds my early presentiment that my boy (if it please God to spare and protect him) will be a distinguished man. But I must say that everything I have heard from him, or of him, since he entered his profession, has justified and confirmed it.

The kind interest you take about him encourages me to send you the two last letters which we have received from him. I showed them to two distinguished captains in the navy, who were very much struck by such a detail of naval operations from a boy, and by the combination of professional spirit and intelligence with tender and affectionate feelings for his home.

I sent them to the Duke of Wellington. Enclosed is the Duke's very characteristic letter, conveying excellent advice, which I know my boy, when he reads it, will scrupulously follow. I have told him to be very proud of the compliment that he has written an account of naval exploits which the Duke considers 'very interesting,' and that he must engrave on his heart the Duke's prediction that 'he is destined most likely to conduct and carry on great operations.'

From the Duke of Wellington.

Walmer Castle, Nov. 13, 1840.

I am very much obliged to you for having sent me the letters from your son William, which are very interesting.

Encourage him by all means to write down his observations upon the operations of which he is the witness, or in which he is an actor; and above all to revise them after writing them, and correct any error into which he may have fallen, leaving on the face of the paper the error and its correction. This habit will accustom him to an accurate observation and report of facts; which are most important, destined as he most likely is to direct and carry on great operations.

Early in 1841 it came under consideration how Lord Melbourne's Government should be attacked again, and overthrown, with most certainty, with least embarrassment to their successors, and with due regard to the interests of the nation.

Of the Conservative leaders, three came early to London to confer. Sir James Graham discussed by letter the alternative courses open, but left all with implicit confidence to the judgment of Sir Robert Peel.

From Sir James Graham.

Netherby: Jan. 17, 1841.

You will have found Stanley in London, and I hear that the Duke went yesterday to Apsley House. Before I see you, you will have arranged your plan of operations, and I shall certainly adopt whatever course you may consider most prudent, on full deliberation, in the present critical juncture of affairs.

An amendment on foreign policy would seem to be inexpedient.

The financial difficulties of the Government must be great. The votes for this year must have been exceeded; the naval estimates were insufficient; on the opening of the Committee of Supply a searching inquiry would seem to be necessary; and if the facts stand as I have represented them, surely the ground is laid for an early motion of a decisive character.

You will have observed the recent proceedings of O'Connell, the establishment of Repeal Wardens in every parish, a register of Repealers for the avowed purpose of marking every dissident, the increased boldness and violence of his language, coupled with the fact that since the Union the British Army in Ireland was never reduced to so small a force. If the Address omit all reference to Repeal, will it be right that in such circumstances we should acquiesce in such silence? I know the immense advantage in the House of Commons which the Government would gain by a first division uniting on Irish ground their scattered ranks and doubtful supporters. But might it not

be possible, if all allusion to Repeal be avoided in the Speech, to propose words which the Government and the Whigs could not well reject, but which when adopted by them would weaken the unholy alliance with O'Connell and the Irish? If they dared, or rather if they stooped, to reject them, then we should have an overt act of submission, betraying the Union itself, and filling the nation with disgust.

I write thus to you with perfect freedom, because I suggest, as if I were talking to you, topics for your consideration, and because my reliance is so implicit on your judgment that, when you have considered them, I am ready cheerfully to be guided by your opinion.

It was decided not to move any amendment to the Address, but in the debate Sir Robert Peel pressed earnestly the importance of a cordial understanding with France. The Duke of Wellington dwelt on the same point.

'From the year 1814,' he said, 'down to the last month of my remaining in the service of the King, I have done more than anyone else to place France in the situation in which she ought to be in the councils of Europe, from a firm conviction that if France be not so placed then there is no security for the preservation of the peace of Europe.'

This utterance of the Duke obtained the warm approval of his colleague.

Lord Mahon to the Duke of Wellington.

Grosvenor Place : Jan. 28, 1841.

I had yesterday a conversation with Sir Robert Peel on the subject of the previous night's debate. He referred to your speech in terms of high commendation and respect, and had the good fortune to hear the concluding portion of it.

But he regrets more than ever the unfortunate omission of France from the Queen's Speech, and he told me that had he foreseen that omission, and the feeling respecting it which appeared in the House of Commons, he should have been very anxious to move an amendment expressing

our concern at this alienation of France, which amendment the Ministers must either have accepted, or seen it carried against them by a large majority. 'But,' added Sir Robert, 'it had grown too late to confer with the Duke and to propose to him a similar line of action in the House of Lords, and without such concert the move in the House of Commons simply would have done more harm than good.'

The funds fell yesterday, which the moneyed men ascribe to the fear of French irritation at finding themselves, as they will think, contemptuously neglected. But it is hoped and believed that Sir Robert's speech, and still more your Grace's, will be sufficient to remedy the evil so foolishly caused, and to allay the pangs of wounded vanity.

Among the papers is the following :

Extract from a Letter from M. Guizot.

Paris : March 19, 1841.

Remerciez, je vous prie, de ma part Sir Robert Peel. On porte ici beaucoup de confiance à ses paroles. Depuis que j'ai pris les affaires, ce sont les meilleures qui me soient venues de Londres, et celles qui m'ont le plus efficacement secondé dans l'œuvre difficile que j'ai entreprise.

One of the chief obstacles which the Duke of Wellington had seen in the way of Sir Robert Peel's return to office was now to be removed. After Easter, the Government having been twice defeated, and compelled to withdraw an Irish Registration Bill, it was confidently expected that they would resign. Owing to this Sir Robert Peel received from Prince Albert communications of which, feeling the extreme delicacy of the situation, he kept a careful record.

Memorandum.

May 11, 1841.

I received a note from Mr. Anson on Saturday evening, May 8, and saw him at ten o'clock on Sunday morning.

He said that he came to me by desire of Prince Albert; that the Prince foresaw the early resignation of the Queen's Government, and my probable succession to Lord Melbourne; and that he was desirous of offering such suggestions as occurred to him with the view of removing difficulties in my future communications with the Queen, and of giving generally all the support in his power to a Government which might be formed by me. Before I could make any remark upon this, Mr. Anson said that the Queen was aware of his visit to me, and of the general object of it, and that Lord Melbourne was aware of it also.

I observed that Mr. Anson had anticipated a question which I was just about to put to him, namely, whether his visit to me was with the cognisance and entire consent of Lord Melbourne, for that I must have humbly and respectfully declined to receive any communication upon the subject of the position of the Government and the steps to be taken in the event of its dissolution, if that communication were not made with the knowledge and acquiescence of Lord Melbourne.

Mr. Anson proceeded to speak of the Household arrangements with reference to the appointments held by ladies, and said the Prince advised me not to bring this subject forward in the first interview I might have with the Queen, and not to insist upon the Queen's making any concession on the constitutional point; that I might be assured there would be no difficulty in effecting a change in the higher offices of the Household held by ladies immediately connected with members of the present Administration; and he mentioned specifically the appointments held by the Duchess of Sutherland, the Duchess of Bedford, and Lady Normanby, as appointments which would be vacated on my representing to the Queen the expediency of a change in them. Mr. Anson said, the Prince hoped that I should consider a change to this extent sufficient.

My conversation with Mr. Anson lasted for some time.

I observed in the course of it, that nothing had been more painful to me in the course of my public life, than the necessity which I had been under in 1839, in the performance of a public duty and in the assertion of a constitutional principle, to make a proposal to the Queen with respect to certain appointments in her Majesty's Household, which had been painful to her feelings; that if my accession to power, now or at any time, were to be accompanied by concessions on the part of the Queen derogatory to her station and dignity, or subjecting her Majesty to any humiliation, either in appearance to the world or in respect to her own personal feelings, it had much better not take place at all—much better for the Queen, for the public, and for myself; that I was personally very indifferent to the possession of power, and should make no sacrifice in foregoing it, but that even if my exclusion from power would have entailed great disappointment upon me I would most willingly submit to it, rather than procure power at the expense of an apparent triumph over the Queen; that if the Queen could form a Government without my intervention, and could select some person for the formation of that Government with whom it would be more easy for her Majesty, after what passed in 1839, to communicate than with me, I would most willingly and without a murmur or a feeling of disappointment waive my pretensions.

I said I would make no sacrifice of honour or of constitutional principle in order to obtain the office of Prime Minister, but any sacrifice of personal interests or ambitions I would most cheerfully make, rather than involve my Sovereign in the appearance of humiliation; that I would mention to Mr. Anson for the information of Prince Albert, what I had meant to do in 1839, in order that Prince Albert might infer from that what were my general views on the subject of the Household arrangements. I said that when I saw her Majesty at that time on the subject of the offices then held by ladies, I had anticipated no practical difficulty. I had not wished to moot any

question of constitutional right or authority on the part of a Minister ; I had taken it for granted that those ladies who held the chief offices, and were immediately connected with the retiring Ministers, would themselves voluntarily resign, and that the Queen would permit those offices to be filled by other ladies having different party connections. I said that, supposing her Majesty on that occasion had mentioned to me that the appointments held by the Duchess of Sutherland, Duchess of Bedford, and Lady Normanby were vacant, and that it was necessary to make other arrangements, I should have been entirely satisfied, and should not have felt it necessary to propose any more extensive change ; that on the present occasion, supposing her Majesty should be under the necessity of requiring my services, I thought it would be much better that her Majesty should be enabled to inform me that the offices held by the ladies in question were actually vacant, having been resigned by them, than that I should require the resignation of them, either as a condition of my accepting office, or as an act subsequently to my acceptance of office which it was my duty as a Minister to advise ; that my single motive for offering this suggestion was the sincere belief that the course which I advised was one that had much less the appearance of triumph on my part (if I might use such an expression), than that which had been indicated by Mr. Anson, and that it would on that account be much more agreeable to my personal feelings.

(Signed) ROBERT PEEL.

I read the above to Mr. Anson on Tuesday, May 11, and he admitted its accuracy.

R. P.

It is recorded by Mr. Greville ('Memoirs,' v. 5) that on May 10 the Duke of Bedford came to consult him as to what the Ladies should do, and that he advised him to talk it over with the Duke of Wellington. But nearly a week sooner, and before Prince Albert's communication, the Duchess had offered to resign.

The Duke of Bedford to Mr. Arbuthnot.

May 4, 1841.

I wish that the Duke of Wellington should be in possession of my feelings and the Duchess's on the subject of my communication to you this morning. He is at liberty to name the subject to Sir Robert Peel whenever he thinks proper to do so, but I do not wish it to go any further.

The contingency I contemplated may not arise, but if it does I wish the Duke to be prepared for it, so far as to put him in possession of our desire to remove all obstacles in so far as the Duchess is concerned. I hope there may be the same feeling in others, but of course I can only answer for ourselves.

May 12, 1841.

I send you a copy of the Queen's letter to the Duchess in June 1837, that the Duke of Wellington and Sir Robert Peel may see in what way the appointment was made. I believe it was the first letter she wrote after her accession, and was entirely her own act. The Duchess, having been brought up in habits of intimacy with many members of the Royal Family, had known the Queen since her childhood. I should like Sir Robert Peel to know this, and also to be informed that not a word relating to public measures, or men, or politics of any kind, has ever passed between the Queen and the Duchess. I believe the Queen never talks on these subjects except to her Ministers, but of course I can only speak positively of what I know in the Duchess's case. She is much attached to the Queen, but would be sorry to stand in the way of any views Sir Robert Peel may have with respect to the Household in the event of his being sent for. At the same time she would be equally unwilling to do anything that might be painful to the Queen, or have the appearance with the public of abandoning her, or countenancing by any act of hers an impression unfavourable to the course taken by her Majesty

in May 1839. Upon that she wishes to give no opinion, considering it to be quite out of her province. All this you will readily understand.

(Enclosure.)

(Copy.)

Kensington Palace : June 25, 1837.

My dear Lady Tavistock,—Having had the pleasure of knowing you from my earliest youth, and having always had the highest esteem for your character, I should be delighted to appoint you as one of my Ladies of the Bedchamber. Should such an appointment be agreeable to you, I beg to see you at Kensington to-morrow at two o'clock.

Believe me always, with much esteem,

Yours very sincerely,

VICTORIA.

About the same time the Duke of Wellington, with his never-failing public spirit and strong sense of duty, placed his services unconditionally at Sir Robert Peel's disposal.

From Mr. Arbuthnot.

(Most private.)

Apsley House : Wednesday, May 12, 1841.

I think it is in a way to be arranged beautifully with the Duke, and to your heart's content.

From your house I went to Argyll House, and found Lord Aberdeen at home. I had a good long talk with him. He agreed to all you had said, though he could not help feeling that as he was a party concerned he ought not to give an opinion.

He said, however, that if it were settled for the Duke to go to the Foreign Office, his anxious wish would be to save him as much of the labour as he could.

I then returned home, and the Duke and I went to the formation of your Cabinet.

I desired him to write down all the names he had mentioned, as I should then see how many there would be to provide for. I felt that in this way I could better bring

him to his own case, and I must say that he at once and most cordially came into the notion of his being in the Cabinet and leading the House of Lords without holding any office at all. Of his own accord he said that this would give you a ready answer to all else who could not receive offices, for you would be enabled to say that the Duke of Wellington had been quite satisfied to receive no office at all. He added that it would give him leisure to assist with his advice all other offices which might require it.

You had better not answer this. When I dine with him, my letters are brought in, and it is usually better that it should never be known that you and I have had discussions on this subject. But as you may want to say something to me about it, I will call on you to-morrow morning.

The Duke has heard that Lord Normanby has said that they *must go*, as it is clear that the country has turned against them.

From the Duke of Wellington.

London: May 17, 1841.

Matters are approaching to a crisis, and I quite concur with you in thinking that you should be prepared to form a Cabinet.

We did not talk over my own position in the conversation which we had the other day. The truth is that all that I desire is to be as useful as possible to the Queen's service—to do anything, go anywhere, and hold any office, or no office, as may be thought most desirable or expedient for the Queen's service by you, and those with whom you will think proper to consult upon the subject. I don't desire even to have a voice in deciding upon it.

My own opinion is that it would be best that I should conduct the affairs of the Government in the House of Lords, as a member of the Council in the Cabinet, but without office. I think that I should be equally useful in every way, and that moreover it would not be inconvenient to you any more than to myself, to be able to cite the

example of my being without office, to the many who must be provided for, and may complain.

Then we must look a little at the situation of the country and of Europe, and of the world, and consider whether it is not desirable that I should be kept in reserve with my hands clear.

If I am not much mistaken, O'Connell will give you some trouble in Ireland! If such should be the case, you may rely upon it that I shall be required to settle the affair.

We have just avoided a general war in Europe. If it had occurred, I should have been called upon, and I should now be the Commander-in-Chief of the Allied Armies in Germany, of each of which I am the Field Marshal. God send that such an event may never occur! But considering the state of France, there can be no certainty.

Then if we look to North America and the United States, what is more probable than that we shall have a war before we can settle our difficulties? In this case also you will require that I should give as much of my attention as possible to the operations of the war.

I think that there are other points referable to our relations with the Palace which might render it desirable to you that I should not be involved in the trammels of an office, however able I may be still to conduct the business with perfect ease to myself.

But I leave all this to your own consideration, concluding as I commenced this letter, that I am ready, and willing, and anxious, to do anything, serve anywhere, in office or out of office, to promote the Queen's service under your auspices.

Next day, May 18, the Government, proposing to alter the tariff in favour of slave-grown sugar, were beaten by a majority of thirty-six. They remained in office, wishing to make the chief issue for a general election their proposal to lay a fixed duty of eight shillings on corn. But this Sir Robert Peel did not allow. As soon as the House met again, he gave notice of a vote of no confidence.

On the same day, May 24, Mr. Arbuthnot sent him informa-

tion that Ministers intended to dissolve immediately after they should be beaten, as they expected, on the Corn Laws, and that they hoped there would be a motion of no confidence, as they felt sure of defeating it by a majority of two or three. In the Cabinet there had been for dissolution a majority of one, Lord Melbourne and Lord Normanby preferring resignation.

In accordance with this decision of the Cabinet, Sir Robert Peel's notice of motion was met by announcing an intended, but not immediate, dissolution.

On the previous day, Sunday, May 23, Sir Robert Peel had had a last interview with Mr. Anson.

Memorandum made by me, Friday, May 28, 1841.

On Sunday, May 23, Mr. Anson called on me, evidently embarrassed by the determination to which the Government had come, not to resign.

He said he was come to assure me that all parties who had authorised his former communication to me had acted with perfect good faith; that they had not had a doubt, as he had often assured me, that absolute resignation would take place, and that I should be called upon to act as Minister.

He admitted that I had foreseen the possibility of circumstances not contemplated by others, and of a change in the views and intentions of the Queen's Ministers; that the reserve which I had occasionally manifested was now fully appreciated; and that ample justice was done to the prudence, and just consideration of the Queen's position, which had induced me not to consider the detail of Household arrangements, and not in any way to commit the Queen.

I said to Mr. Anson that I was convinced that her Majesty and Prince Albert had acted towards me with perfect good faith and pure and honourable intentions; that the object of Prince Albert had been to obviate possible difficulties, to render my official intercourse with her Majesty as free as possible from everything disagreeable, in consequence of past occurrences, either to her Majesty or myself; that I had always been sensible of the

very peculiar position in which the communications he had made to me, with the consent of Lord Melbourne, had placed me; that I had been chiefly anxious that the kind intentions of Prince Albert should not involve anyone, through indiscretion on my part, in any embarrassment; that I had no feelings but those of gratitude for the motives which had induced the recent communications to me; that I could never seek the slightest advantage from them; and if the result were that the Queen and Prince Albert were satisfied that I had no such views as to extorting unbecoming concessions from her Majesty, or interfering with her personal comfort, as my political enemies had imputed to me, that result was very gratifying to me.

Mr. Anson seemed greatly relieved by the assurances which I thus gave him, and said they would be highly satisfactory to the Queen and Prince Albert.

In the course of our conversation he read a memorandum in pencil in which it was stated that the Queen and Prince Albert had had every reason to calculate upon the resignation of the Government; that the opinions of Lord Melbourne had been overruled by a majority of the Cabinet; that he had reluctantly given way; that the Queen considered it her duty to defer to the advice of the Cabinet, and to consent to dissolution; and that Prince Albert thought that, whether his opinions were or were not in conformity with that of the Cabinet, he could not with propriety give any advice on a political question of such vital importance in opposition to the responsible advisers of the Queen.

ROBERT PEEL.

On May 27 Sir Robert Peel brought forward his motion. Taking his stand upon the principle that to carry on government without the confidence of the House of Commons is at variance with the spirit of the Constitution, and reviewing the defeats and failures of the Whig Ministry, he submitted to a House of Commons elected under their own auspices the question, whether it approved or not of their continuance in power.

The debate lasting five nights, he closed it with a pungent answer to the chief defence of Lord John Russell and his colleagues. They had clung, he said, with desperate fidelity to the precedent of 1784, for retaining office through a long series of defeats; but, 'with all personal respect for them, it did appear rather ludicrous to see them stretching forward with such eagerness to plant their feet in the gigantic footsteps of Mr. Pitt.' He again asked the House to affirm or to deny that they possessed its confidence.

The House, by a majority of one, denied it, and on June 23 Parliament was dissolved. Lord John Russell's reason for choosing so early a day was said to be that in his opinion the more the country looked at the Government measures, the less it would like them.

From Mr. Disraeli.

Grosvenor Gate : Sunday, June 6, 1841.

Dear Sir Robert,—I only heard this late last night, and would not have sent it, were I not convinced of its authenticity. Ever your obliged servant,

B. DISRAELI.

Memorandum.

The opinion of Lord J. Russell, expressed on Saturday, June 5, is that the feeling in favour of the Government measures will not increase, and that in the present state of affairs a delay of 'six weeks' may altogether terminate it.

That the present position of the Government is a lesson to future Administrations never to neglect their money bills, as Parliament 'ought to be dissolved on Monday.'

He entertains great apprehensions lest the Tories should contrive to interpose delays, without the appearance of faction.

As the moment of Sir Robert Peel's accession to the highest post drew nearer, it appears that his prospects of success in discharging its duties became to many in the religious world a subject of interest and of prayer.

From Lord Ashley.

(Private.)

July 13, 1841.

A very good and very dear friend of mine, the Duchess of Beaufort, has requested me to be the channel of forwarding to you, along with her most sincere wishes and heartfelt prayers for your personal and political welfare, the accompanying volume of Hare's Sermons.

They are open, no doubt, to criticism in various points, but taken together they are—especially the tenth—very able combinations of faith and intellect, and singularly adapted to the spiritual mind, and, I may say, the public wants of the present day.

You will hardly require a reason why religious people like my excellent friend should entertain such an interest for your success in the career to which you have been destined. They hope and pray that you may become an instrument in the hands of God for the good government of this kingdom, and the honour and advancement of the Church, and that your conduct as Prime Minister (whenever it shall please Providence to call you to that office) may be marked by the pure and simple and entire faith which will form the security of your own Administration, and a bright example to all future statesmen.

I am sure you will excuse me for writing to you thus. I am speaking, I know, the language of thousands.

At the general election Sir Robert Peel's personal exertions were exemplary.

To Mr. Goulburn.

Drayton Manor: July 29, 1841.

Not satisfied with my own contest during the week, I had a large party of county voters to breakfast with me very early, and we set out to attend the nomination of two Conservative candidates for South Staffordshire.

I need say no more, in answer to your kind inquiries,

to convince you that I am not dead, according to one report which I read in the papers, nor have undergone a severe operation for a lumbar abscess, as I read in another.

I found on coming here a sharpish contest for the second seat at Tamworth, took for granted that I should be utterly unable to go through with it, but found I gained strength as I went on, and having carried Tamworth, am now doing what I can in North Warwickshire for Dugdale, in South Staffordshire for Ingestre and Dyott, and in North Staffordshire for W. Baring.

The truth is, it is in vain to ask tradesmen and farmers to go to the poll and leave their business, and tell them that important interests are at stake, unless gentlemen will themselves set the example, and make some sacrifice of time and comfort.

We had to-day groans in abundance, and some stones, our opponents having the advantage of a Lichfield mob. But still I think our prospects are pretty good. Hardinge thinks we shall gain twelve at least on the whole.

The results of the general election confirmed Whig fears and Tory hopes. Lord John Russell's policy of a fixed duty on corn (which M'Culloch undertook to show would increase the average duty by forty per cent.) as against Peel's 'sliding scale' found little favour. Everywhere Conservatives gained seats: in English boroughs seven, in English counties twenty-two, in Ireland eight, O'Connell himself being defeated in Dublin. In Scotland they gained only two seats, owing to the Church question.

Feeling on this ran so strongly that High Churchmen were ready to support whoever would take their side. They had some hopes that the Conservative leaders might care more for the Establishment than did Lord Melbourne. But the Duke of Wellington, while ready to support Lord Aberdeen's Bill, refused to bind himself to more advanced proposals. He promised his attention to them, but expressed extreme concern to escape the 'vile passions' of religious civil war.

The Duke of Wellington to the Duke of Argyll.

London: April 21, 1841.

I was a consenting party to the measure proposed by the Earl of Aberdeen, for which I would have voted if it had ever come to a vote in the House of Lords.

If your Grace should propose any other measure, I will consider of it with the attention due to everything from your Grace. But I approve of the course which Lord Aberdeen has taken even to this day. And I beg leave to decline out of doors, and in writing, or even orally, to discuss any other measure, or the opinions which I entertain on these questions.

They have given me the greatest pain. About a quarter of a century has now elapsed since the Prince Regent, afterwards King George IV., called me from the command of the army abroad to take my seat in his councils. Scotland was, as then termed by my poor friend Lord Liverpool, 'the best conditioned country in the world.' I have frequently quoted his words, in concurrence with the truth of the observation.

She is now on the eve of the greatest misfortune that can happen to a civilised country, unless a merciful Providence endows the leading men of all classes and professions with moderation and sense, to induce and to enable them to avoid it. We are on the eve of a religious civil war, in the operations of which the vilest passions of the most violent men will be brought into play.

Entertaining this opinion as I do sincerely, I recommend to all those who have any influence and any knowledge upon the subject to give their best attention to it.

I will attend to any measure that may be proposed for discussion. But I cannot be a party to the introduction of any one.

Sir Robert Peel, too, from early days an admirer of the Church of Scotland, but holding that such critical questions as were now raised should be arranged on principle, and not by electioneering bargains, had refused to pledge himself to the Duke of

Argyll's Bill, and had told him that he could not answer for its favourable reception in the House of Lords.

Leading statesmen and Churchmen dealt loyally with the controversy, as imperilling high interests both of Church and State. But the meaner sort were using it to inflame political or ecclesiastical faction.

Sir Thomas Cochrane to Mr. Bonham.

Greenock : June 21, 1841.

The reported interview between Sir Robert Peel and the Scotch deputation is playing the devil here and in Renfrew, and will do the same in all this part of Scotland, it being a tool in the hands of the Radicals, which they will wield with all their power and great advantage.

I enclose you a letter from a very influential person here, together with a statement of the alleged interview, and I think it will be very desirable that you should show them to Sir Robert, in case he may detect errors, the correction of which might neutralise the feeling that has been created.

I have begun my canvass, and with prospects of success, should this all-exciting Church question not throw me over.

I have this moment learnt that a red-hot enthusiast is writing to Sir Robert to ascertain if the statement of the interview be correct. Now upon the answer may in point of fact turn my election, for this party has great influence. So that if Sir Robert's answer is not likely to prove satisfactory, it would be better not to send it till after the election.

Sir Thomas Cochrane's Greenock correspondent writes :

With such an impression on the public mind regarding the sentiments of Sir Robert Peel on the all-absorbing question of the Church as these statements have produced, a most serious impediment is raised hostile to the Conservative elections in Scotland. It will be the turning point here. I earnestly hope that such an answer will be received from Sir Robert as will enlist all good Conservatives on your side.

Enclosed was a newspaper assertion that Sir Robert Peel 'had professed his determination to require that the Church should prostrate herself beneath the feet of the Civil power.'

From the 'Witness' of June 19, 1841.

We state, on authority the most unexceptionable, that within the last fortnight Sir Robert Peel has expressed a resolution not to support the Duke of Argyll's Bill—that he has professed his determination that, in any settlement of the present disputes, there must be included provision for securing her submission to the Civil Courts in matters held by the Church to be purely spiritual, and the restoration of the deposed ministers to their former status, spiritual as well as temporal, thus requiring that she shall prostrate herself beneath the feet of the Civil power, and sacrifice to the despotism of the usurping Court her spiritual independence, and the rights and liberties of her people.

The Duke of Argyll, who had introduced the deputation responsible for publishing such a statement, differed from them as to what the Minister had said, and obtained from himself a truer version.

From the Duke of Argyll.

3 Connaught Place : June 24, 1841.

As a difference of opinion has arisen between myself and the gentlemen who accompanied me at the interview which we had lately the honour of having with you, as to what you said relative to Scotch Church affairs, you would oblige me very much by stating the substance of what passed upon that occasion ; as I should regret very much that any the slightest misrepresentation of your sentiments should go forth to the public upon a subject of such vital importance to Scotland as the question at issue between the civil and ecclesiastical courts in that part of the Empire.

To the Duke of Argyll.

Drayton Manor : June 25, 1841.

I reply with the greater alacrity because extracts from Scotch newspapers have been sent to me containing very gross misrepresentations.

To the best of my recollection the following is the purport of the observations made by me.

That I should not enter into an engagement to support the Bill which has been submitted to the House of Lords by your Grace, but that it was the less necessary to discuss in detail the provisions of that Bill, as it could make no progress during the remainder of the Session which was then about to terminate, and that the meeting of the new Parliament in August would not probably be of sufficient duration to admit of the mature consideration of the very important subject which the Bill involved.

I observed that, even if I were to admit (which I could not) that the provisions of the Bill were in themselves wholly unexceptionable, still they were mainly prospective only, and that I did not think the House of Lords would consent merely to legislate for the future, if the General Assembly should persist in its claim of authority to depose ministers of the Church upon the ground that those ministers had obeyed the law, as interpreted by the Supreme Court in Scotland, and by the House of Lords, on an appeal preferred to that tribunal at the instance of the Church of Scotland :

That I presumed that the right to depose ministers involved substantially the right to deprive them of the privileges and emoluments attached by law to their parochial cures ; and that it appeared to me that, if such penalties could be inflicted upon the grounds alleged in this case for the infliction of them, the authority of the Church over the statute law and civil tribunals of the country would be paramount, even in matters of a civil and temporal nature :

That I thought that such a claim on the part of the Church, and the feelings that it would engender, would greatly diminish, if not altogether destroy, any advantage that might have been hoped for from merely prospective legislation, and that new causes of difference and new conflicts of authority, not provided for by such legislation, would very soon occur.

A remark was made in the course of conversation that,

if the present state of things were to continue, there might ultimately be a separation of the Church from the State in Scotland, for that the Church might feel it an imperative duty to forego any temporal advantage she might derive from a union with the State.

To this I replied that I thought it better not to discuss the extreme measures to which it might be possible either for the Church or the State in certain contingencies to resort.

I said that there were few persons out of the pale of the Church of Scotland who took a more friendly interest in its concerns than I did, or were more anxious that it should retain unimpaired all its rightful authority, and that I earnestly hoped that some solution of the present difficulties would be found, rather through the influence of moderation and good sense than in the resort to extreme measures of any kind.

The above is, according to my recollection, the general purport of the observations which I made on the occasion to which your Grace refers.

Sir Robert Peel received also from the chief adversary of the Church on this question a very long letter, in which he takes for granted the truth of the newspaper paragraphs; asserts that 'the real object of nine-tenths of the Church party is to aid the Whig Government;' and strives to impress on the English statesman 'the utter insignificance of the Church party in Scotland.' Sir Robert Peel knew better. He knew something of the Church party, and something of Scotland.

From Mr. Hope.

Edinburgh: June 24, 1841.

Two days after an interview which Mr. Dunlop had with you, he appeared in Edinburgh, boasting that he had succeeded in drawing even more than he expected on the Church question, and had now found out that your opinions were so very horrible, that he was determined to turn the advantage he had gained to account in every place in

Scotland where the Church party could influence any votes whatever during the ensuing elections.

Had you been informed that he was a bitter Whig, of course you would not have said a word to him; and if you had supposed his object had been political, you would not have admitted his claim to any interview professedly on the Church question.

I told Lord Aberdeen what he had done. But though his eyes are quite open to their tricks in most respects, he will not yet fully believe that the real object of nine-tenths of the leaders of the Church party is to try to turn their influence, such as it is, to account in aid of the Government, of whom they are keen adherents. This we here have long known and seen.

But Dunlop has gone further than making use of this conversation in private. I send you a copy of the 'Edinburgh Evening Post' and of the 'Courant,' in each of which you will find separate letters from him addressed to some friend at Greenock, which will display to you the character of his ungentlemanlike conduct.

These letters are particularly intended for the county of Renfrew. Colonel Mure, the Conservative candidate there, chose very hastily to pledge himself to support the Duke of Argyll's Bill. I hear he is now satisfied that this declaration (made, I fear, for the sake of trying to gain support) was very unnecessary, that he has disgusted many of his friends by it, and obtained no support at all. Notwithstanding this pledge, Dunlop calls, you will see, on all the friends of the Church to support Mr. Patrick Stewart against him, and gives a very impudent account of the interview he had with you.

Much good will be done by his publication of your opinions. Others will be prevented from making the same declarations (on a subject which few understand) which Colonel Mure has so needlessly done, and thereby will not add to the embarrassments which even a few pledges would create in dealing with so serious a question. And those who know the utter insignificance of the Church party will

take care to manifest that feeling the more decidedly since your opinion has thus been blazoned through Scotland in the midst of the election contest.

I have all along told Lord Aberdeen that Renfrew was the only county where the Church party had any influence. But even there they will be soundly beaten.

This prophecy was confuted by the event. The Church party prevailed both in Greenock and in the county of Renfrew.

In England the burning religious question was between the Tractarian and the Protestant party, and as a leader of the Protestants Lord Ashley took care to warn Sir Robert Peel that, to retain their political support, as well as for higher reasons, it would be expected of him to appoint no 'Puseyite' to high office in the Church. The letter, published in Lord Shaftesbury's 'Life,' closes with an earnest exhortation to enter on the duties of First Minister in a spirit of faith and prayer.

From Lord Ashley.

July 26, 1841.

You are now about to be summoned to the highest and most responsible of all earthly situations. No crowned head has a tenth part of the dignity and moral power that accompany the Prime Minister of the Sovereign of these realms. It will place you, if you choose to assume it, at the head of the political and religious movement of the whole world. No statesman will ever have acceded to office with so many and so fervent prayers to the Throne of Grace. My firm belief is that thousands and tens of thousands have daily poured forth the most heartfelt devotions, that you might become an instrument in the hands of Almighty God for the advancement and glory of His Church, the welfare of His people, and of all mankind. In these days of speciousness, of peril, and of perplexity, there is nothing to guide you through the false and liberal shoals on every side of our course but a vigorous and dauntless faith, which shall utterly disregard the praise of men, and, having a single eye to the glory of God, seek none but that which comes from Him only.

If the piety of your supporters can be of any avail (and we know from Scripture that it is) you will be sustained by the prayers of a noble company. Many, unknown to you, and to me, and perhaps to any but God and their own hearts, will 'wish you good luck in the name of the Lord.'

To Lord Ashley.

Drayton Manor: Aug. 1, 1841.

If you will read a late article in the 'British Critic' you will find that I do not stand very high in the estimation of the Puseyites.

I have no doubt you state correctly both the extent and the bitterness of the feud which is raging in the Church. It is fit and right that men should adhere steadfastly to sincere religious opinions, and should enforce and maintain them with all the ability and strength of argument they can command. But it frequently happens that these zealous controversialists on religious matters leave on the mind of their readers one conviction stronger than any other, namely, that Christian charity is consumed in their burning zeal for their own opinions.

Among the earliest congratulations on the verdict of the constituencies were those of Mr. Croker, who describes the issue as having been one of confidence, not in measures but in men, not in a policy but personally in Sir Robert Peel.

From Mr. Croker.

July 20, 1841.

The elections are wonderful, and the curiosity is that all turns on the name of Sir Robert Peel. 'Tis the first time that I remember in our history that the people have chosen the first Minister for the Sovereign. Mr. Pitt's case in '84 is the nearest analogy; but then the people only confirmed the Sovereign's choice; here every Conservative candidate professed himself in plain words to be Sir Robert Peel's man, and on that ground was elected.

But in the result of the elections, and the station in which they place you, I feel more pride than pleasure. I cannot wish you joy of what is no doubt honour, but honour heavy laden with anxiety and care. I remember and feel the truth of Garrick's compliment to Lord Camden :

Office to you is but labour and care ;
Wish joy to our Country, and King.

When the new Parliament met, Sir Robert Peel supported the election as Speaker of Mr. Lefevre, of which he has left the following record :

Memorandum.

I wrote to Mr. Lefevre after much communication with the leading members of the Conservative party, and after strenuous efforts on my part to secure unanimity in respect to his re-election.

It was said by some Protectionists, in the course of the debates in 1846, that the Protectionists had overruled my wish to oppose Mr. Lefevre. This statement, like many others, was not only not true, but the reverse of the truth.

Lord Lowther and many of those who were afterwards the most eager Protectionists were decidedly adverse to the re-election of Mr. Lefevre. The most moderate of the Conservative party were, generally speaking, in his favour.

R. P.

The more interesting letters preserved of this date are as follows :

To the Duke of Wellington.

Drayton Manor : Aug. 1, 1841.

I have been much occupied in attempting to prevent disunion at the very opening of the Session.

Many of the most eager of our party are, or at least were, decidedly in favour of opposing Shaw Lefevre for the Chair. I am against it.

First, I do not think it for the public advantage that

the election for the Chair should necessarily be made the object of a party.

Secondly, I do not think it would be just towards a Speaker who has shown himself well qualified for his office, and has in my opinion acted fairly and impartially, to reject him.

Thirdly, I think that the late Speaker, if he be re-elected with the general goodwill of the House, will have greater authority and power to preserve order than a Speaker elected after a party contest.

Fourthly, I do not think we have any person to propose who would appear to advantage as Speaker, all things considered, when compared with Lefevre.

Fifthly, it is not a very high or satisfactory ground to allege for opposing Shaw Lefevre that the Whigs and Radicals opposed Lord Canterbury. We said it was unjust and impolitic to oppose Lord Canterbury, and it seems to me more becoming to a great party to act upon its own principle, and even to apply it against itself, than to say to its opponents, Though our principle was the right one, yet by way of retaliation we will adopt yours.

I find that the opinions I entertain are also held by the great majority of those who take a lead in debates and public business—by Goulburn, Graham, Lord Stanley, Lord Eliot, &c.

I mean, therefore, as a decision is desirable before the Session begins—for there would be no advantage in a squabble among ourselves at a public meeting—to write to Mr. Shaw Lefevre, and state to him that I do not intend to oppose his re-election as Speaker.

I shall be very glad to hear from you that your opinion is in favour of this course.

From the Duke of Wellington.

August 3, 1841.

I quite concur in all the views which you have taken, and in the conclusions to which you have come. And I trust that you will find your followers in general sufficiently

wise to feel the force of those views of the question, and the justice and wisdom of your decision.

The other side of the question was argued in the 'Times' newspaper in a leading article, and in a bitter anonymous letter ascribed erroneously to Disraeli.

From Mr. Disraeli.

Carlton : Aug. 17, 1841.

Dear Sir Robert,—On arriving in town to-day I met Bonham, who informed me, with that morose jocularly which he sometimes affects, that the party was flourishing, notwithstanding my attempts 'to stir up dissension on the Speakership.'

As I have been in Bucks during the month, and with the exception of Lord Lyndhurst have not even spoken to any member of either House of Parliament, I was somewhat surprised at this salute, and learn on inquiry that I was the writer of a letter in the 'Times' newspaper signed 'Pittacus,' that it had been a subject of general conversation, was universally ascribed to me, and that no member of the party had the slightest doubt of the circumstance—Bonham too coming from your roof.

I confess my mortification that, after having occasionally for nearly ten years exercised my pen when I thought it could serve the interests of the party, I should be esteemed the author of a paper which I remember as one absolutely deficient in the commonest rules of composition.

If I were sure that you had read this paper, I would not have troubled you with these lines, because I cannot forget the flattering and felicitous manner in which, with reference to something that appeared during the business of 1839, you intimated to me that you had recognised me by my style. But very probably you have only heard of this letter of 'Pittacus;' and therefore do not deem me impertinent if I assure you I can lay no claim to the distinction of its authorship.

Pray do not trouble yourself to notice this, which I

should not have written had I been sure of an opportunity of speaking to you in the House.

I have the honour to be, dear Sir Robert,

Your faithful servant,

B. DISRAELI.

To the Duke of Wellington.

Drayton Manor : Aug. 8, 1841.

It appears to me that an amendment to the Address is inevitable ; and that the point on which it should turn should be mainly in respect to men, and not to measures—that it should repeat the declarations of last Session, that the Government had not the confidence of Parliament, and, it may now add with truth, of the country, after the appeal recently made.

To Mr. Goulburn.

Drayton Manor : Aug. 21, 1841.

Depend upon it the Government will not resign on a vague speculation that they should embarrass their successors. Resignation without a manifest necessity is the most hazardous, most unpopular, and most ridiculous of political manœuvres.

They talk of the Government becoming Conservative—some add, making propositions for union of parties. I disbelieve both reports.

Resolutions expressing want of confidence in the Government were moved as an amendment to the Address. On the fourth night of the debate (Aug. 28) Sir Robert Peel, at the close of his speech, reaffirmed the principles on which he had acted in Opposition, as being those on which alone he would consent to serve. In plainest words prophetic of the future he declared that he would depend for help on none—whether Radicals, Repealers, or Ultra Tories—with whom he did not agree ; he would act not upon other men's opinions as to his duty, but upon his own ; so soon as in this he ceased to have the support of Parliament and of the country, his task would be at an end.

If I accept office, it shall be by no unnatural and factious combination with men—honest I believe them to be—entertaining extreme opinions, but from whom I dissent. If I exercise power, it shall be upon my conception—perhaps imperfect, perhaps mistaken, but my sincere conception—of public duty. That power I will not hold, unless I can hold it consistently with the maintenance of my own opinions ; and that power I will relinquish the moment that I am not supported in the maintenance of them by the confidence of this House, and of the people of this country.

The amendment was carried, by a majority of ninety-one ; on August 30 the Whig Ministers resigned ; and by their advice the Queen sent for Sir Robert Peel.

CHAPTER XVII.

1841.

Second Ministry of Sir Robert Peel—Formation of the Government—Disappointments—Londonderry—Stratford Canning—Disraeli—Financial Reform—Goulburn on Income Tax—Graham on Retrenchment—Stanley on the Tariff—Gladstone on Income Tax and House Tax, and on the Sliding Scale—Fine Arts Commission—Birth of the Prince of Wales—Peel and Gladstone.

BETWEEN Sir Robert Peel's first and second Ministry there was a marked contrast; in duration—the one lasting four months, the other five years—and in the conditions under which they were formed.

In 1834 the King had sent for him too soon; the Lords were weakened by the Reform Act; the Commons showed, before dissolution, a majority of 261, and after an appeal to the country, still a majority against him. In 1841 his return to power was overdue, delayed two years by the Household question, and three months more by the Whig dissolution, which gave him a majority of ninety-one.

Again, in 1834, when he wished to form a Cabinet on a broad basis, Lord Stanley and his friends refused to join it. In 1841 they had long been acting as his colleagues in opposition.

On the other hand he had now to face more arduous questions. In 1834 the country was at peace, trade thriving, manufacture prosperous, pauperism lessened, public revenue increased. In 1841 there was war with China, coming war with Afghanistan, with France 'relations hovering on the verge of war' (see p. 498), with the United States disputed boundaries; in trade, depression; in manufacture, sharp distress; workpeople in thousands fed by charity; rioting, rickburning, sedition, socialism, chartism. The national finances, showing deficit after deficit, were in grave disorder. All these embarrassments required a bold initiative, a skilful hand.

The first task was to form the Government. Of his old Cabinet, Sir Robert Peel reappointed nine. Five vacancies were left, Mr. Herries and Sir George Murray being out of Parliament, Lord Ashburton declining office, Lord de Grey serving without Cabinet rank as Irish Viceroy, and Lord Rosslyn exchanging the Presidency of the Council for the Buckhounds. Of the five places three were given to Lord Stanley and his friends, one to a Scottish peer, Lord Haddington, one to the Duke of Buckingham, representing agriculture.

In assigning duties, War and the Colonies, as the most interesting and important department, were given to Stanley; Home affairs to Graham, whom Stanley acknowledged to be better qualified than himself by habits of business, by industry, and by temper; to Ripon fell the Board of Trade, to Buckingham the Privy Seal, to Ellenborough the Board of Control, to Haddington the Admiralty; Hardinge became Secretary at War.¹ At the Exchequer, held in 1834 by himself, Peel now placed Goulburn; and at the Foreign Office, Wellington unselfishly made room for Aberdeen.

Of the younger men, Lord Canning became Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs; Lord Lincoln, First Commissioner of Land Revenue; Mr. Sidney Herbert, Secretary to the Admiralty; Mr. Gladstone, assistant and afterwards successor to Lord Ripon at the Board of Trade.

Much of this was arranged by word of mouth, but some letters of interest remain.

From Mr. J. W. Freshfield, M.P.

(Strictly confidential.)

Dorking: Aug. 28, 1841.

I wish to convey to you what I believe to be a very strong feeling with the most thinking part of the public, that an Administration formed of any considerable portion of gentlemen who have been long before the public as members of Tory Governments will soon fall into unpopularity. All their measures will be regarded with jealousy, they will constitute a source of weakness to you, and furnish successful grounds of attack to our opponents.

¹ The Secretary for War was responsible for policy; the Secretary at War for finance and details.

I scarcely need say that the Duke, Lord Aberdeen, Lord Stanley, Sir James Graham, Sir Henry Hardinge, stand deservedly well with the public. I know on the other hand that friends of my own, whether deservedly or not, are and will be unpopular, and if employed, *you* will have to maintain their respective departments as well as your own.

Disappointments were many. Among those left out were Herries, Wynn, Ashburton, Londonderry, Stratford Canning, and Disraeli.

To Lord Lyndhurst.

Sept. 5, 1841.

Surely, when it has been utterly impossible for me to include in the arrangements such men as Herries, Wynn, Lord Ashburton, and many others, who were fighting the battle with me up to the day of the dissolution, some being in Parliament, others (like Dawson, my own brother-in-law) having stood contests—surely when these are passed by from the absolute want of power on my part, Beckett, who was not in the last Parliament, and is not in the present, cannot reasonably complain.

I have but one object in view, namely, to do justice to individuals, and to ensure the efficient execution of the public service.

For every appointment there are three or four well-qualified candidates, and if, in such a crisis as this, every one will think of his own personal position, and press his own personal claims, the sooner the Conservative party abandons power, the better.

Lord Londonderry, refusing to return as Ambassador to his old post at Vienna, was left unemployed.

From Mr. Arbuthnot.

Sept. 1, 1841.

The Duke said that at Vienna, Metternich would know Lord Londonderry well, and prevent him from doing mischief; and that for his part he would rather have him in the House of Lords without any office, and prepared to

do his worst, than see him at the Board of Ordnance ; but that you must dispose of him as you thought best.

To Lord Londonderry.

Sept. 16, 1841.

I deeply regret that you are dissatisfied and disappointed with the result of the communications in reference to your employment in the service of the Crown.

I have not the letter before me which you wrote to Sir Henry Hardinge in May or June last, but certainly the impression on my mind was that it pointed to the Embassy in Paris, and to the Lieutenancy of Ireland, as the main if not almost the exclusive objects of your ambition.

I repeat to you the assurance that it was not from indifference to your wishes, nor from the preference given to the political claims of others, but from a conscientious sense of public duty, that I and others whom I was bound to consult felt ourselves unable to propose to her Majesty your nomination to either of those appointments.

My impression also was that you referred to the Ordnance, and stated that after it had been held by — it was an appointment which you could not accept, unless a seat in the Cabinet were attached to it. In reappointing Sir George Murray, who has been Secretary of State, I did not recommend that he should be included in the Cabinet.

I cannot close this painful subject without sincerely thanking you for the assurances of undiminished private and personal regard which you have conveyed to me, and without entreating you to believe that I entertain similar feelings and with equal warmth and cordiality with regard to yourself.

To the Right Hon. H. Hobhouse.

(*Private.*)

Sept. 18, 1841.

I have had a most laborious and harassing duty to perform in constituting the Government, and making the Household arrangements of the Queen.

The latter are, I believe, equally satisfactory to her

Majesty and to myself, but you can readily believe that this double object could not be attained without the most sedulous care and caution in every step. I must say that I was met by her Majesty in a very fair and considerate spirit.

Sir Stratford Canning, declining to serve in the Household or in the Colonies, was sent to Constantinople.

From Lord Stanley.

Sept. 2, 1841.

Nobody can be more convinced than I am of [Sir Stratford] Canning's unfitness for parliamentary office; and I fear his pretensions in any other line are so high as to render their gratification out of the question.

To Lord Stanley.

Sept. 21, 1841.

I have had an interview of three quarters of an hour with Sir Stratford Canning. How that man tortures himself, and every other person with whom he comes in contact!

He is the only person whom on the ground of political disappointment I have mentioned to Aberdeen with the expression of a personal wish in his favour.

Aberdeen has offered him one of the only four appointments tenable by a diplomatist of the rank of an Ambassador—the Embassy to Constantinople. He has been with me to-day putting every sort of hypothetical case about his future position in the event of his acceptance or his refusal.

I told him at last that, of all the candidates for office, he had been treated with the greatest consideration. You had offered him whatever the Colonial Office had to confer; I offered him the highest office in the Household tenable by a commoner; he had now the offer of an Embassy in point of real substantial importance, from the peculiar position of the Porte and of the Eastern questions, probably the first.

Among the younger men passed by was one who in the end made his own way to power.

From Mr. Disraeli.

Grosvenor Gate : Sept. 5, 1841.

Dear Sir Robert,—I have shrunk from obtruding myself upon you at this moment, and should have continued to do so if there were any one on whom I could rely to express my feelings.

I am not going to trouble you with claims similar to those with which you must be wearied. I will not say that I have fought since 1834 four contests for your party, that I have expended great sums, have exerted my intelligence to the utmost for the propagation of your policy, and have that position in life which can command a costly seat.

But there is one peculiarity in my case on which I cannot be silent. I have had to struggle against a storm of political hate and malice which few men ever experienced, from the moment, at the instigation of a member of your Cabinet, I enrolled myself under your banner, and I have only been sustained under these trials by the conviction that the day would come when the foremost man of this country would publicly testify that he had some respect for my ability and my character.

I confess, to be unrecognised at this moment by you appears to me to be overwhelming, and I appeal to your own heart—to that justice and that magnanimity which I feel are your characteristics—to save me from an intolerable humiliation.

Believe me, dear Sir Robert,

Your faithful servant,

B. DISRAELI.

The appeal was seconded, probably without Mr. Disraeli's knowledge, by the devoted partner of his aspirations.

Mrs. Disraeli to Sir Robert Peel.

(Confidential.) Grosvenor Gate : Saturday night [Sept. 5, 1841].

Dear Sir Robert Peel,—I beg you not to be angry with me for my intrusion, but I am overwhelmed with anxiety.

My husband's political career is for ever crushed, if you do not appreciate him.

Mr. Disraeli's exertions are not unknown to you, but there is much he has done that you cannot be aware of, though they have had no other aim but to do you honour, no wish for recompense but your approbation.

He has gone further than most to make your opponents his personal enemies. He has stood four most expensive elections since 1834, and gained seats from Whigs in two, and I pledge myself as far as one seat, that it shall always be at your command.

Literature he has abandoned for politics. Do not destroy all his hopes, and make him feel his life has been a mistake.

May I venture to name my own humble but enthusiastic exertions in times gone by, for the party, or rather for your own splendid self? They will tell you at Maidstone, that more than 40,000*l.* was spent through my influence only.

Be pleased not to answer this, as I do not wish any human being to know I have written to you this humble petition.

I am now, as ever, dear Sir Robert,

Your most faithful servant,

MARY ANNE DISRAELI.

With his usual prudence Sir Robert Peel first disclaimed any responsibility for the instigation of Mr. Disraeli (in 1834?) by a member of the Cabinet, unnamed, to join the party; then courteously intimated that but for pressure of other claims he would have been happy to accept the 'offer of service.'

Sir Robert Peel to Mr. Disraeli.

Whitehall : Sept. 7, 1841.

My dear Sir,—I must in the first place observe that no member of the Cabinet which I have formed ever received from me the slightest authority to make to you the communication to which you refer.

Had I been consulted by that person, I should have at

once declined to authorise a communication which would have been altogether at variance with the principle on which I have uniformly acted in respect to political engagements, and by adhering to which I have left myself at entire liberty to reconcile—as far as my limited means allow—justice to individual claims with the efficient conduct of the public service.

I know not who is the member of the Cabinet to whom you allude, and cannot but think he acted very imprudently. But quite independently of this consideration, I should have been very happy had it been in my power to avail myself of your offer of service ; and your letter is one of the many I receive which too forcibly impress upon me how painful and invidious is the duty which I have been compelled to undertake. I am only supported in it by the consciousness that my desire has been to do justice.

I trust also that when candidates for parliamentary office calmly reflect on my position, and the appointments I have made—when they review the names of those previously connected with me in public life whom I have been absolutely compelled to exclude, the claims founded on acceptance of office in 1834 with the almost hopeless prospects of that day, the claims too founded on new party combinations—I trust they will then understand how perfectly insufficient are the means at my disposal to meet the wishes that are conveyed to me by men whose co-operation I should be proud to have, and whose qualifications and pretensions for office I do not contest.

In reply, Mr. Disraeli explained, that by ‘instigation’ he did not mean ‘promise’ or ‘bargain.’

From Mr. Disraeli.

Grosvenor Gate : Sept. 8, 1841.

Dear Sir Robert,—Justice requires that I should state that you have entirely misconceived my meaning, in supposing that I intended even to intimate that a promise

of official promotion had ever been made to me, at any time, by any member of your Cabinet.

I have ever been aware that it was not in the power of any member of your Cabinet to fulfil such engagements, had he made them: permit me to add that it is utterly alien from my nature to bargain and stipulate on such subjects. Parliamentary office should be the recognition of party service and parliamentary ability, and as such only was it to me an object of ambition.

It appears to me that you have mistaken an allusion to my confidence in your sympathy for a reference to a pledge received from a third person. If such a pledge had been given me by yourself, and not redeemed, I should have taken refuge in silence. Not to be appreciated may be a mortification: to be baulked of a promised reward is only a vulgar accident of life, to be borne without a murmur.

Your faithful servant,

B. DISRAELI.

The next business was financial. When Parliament met in late September, Lord John Russell urged that the new Ministry should at once announce their policy on the Corn Laws, and 'adopt a plan by which they might hope to make the revenue equal to the expenditure.'

On both these points reply was easy. 'If I am responsible,' said Sir Robert Peel, 'for not proposing measures with respect to the Corn Laws within one month of my accession to office, what must be thought of the Government which has held office for five years, and never until the month of May 1841 intimated on its own part a united opinion on the subject?'

'As regards finance, what is the position I inherit? In the year 1838 there was a deficiency of 1,428,000*l.* In 1839 there was a deficiency of 430,000*l.* In 1840 there was a deficiency of 1,457,000*l.* In 1841 there is a deficiency of 1,850,000*l.* For the year ending April 5, 1842, it is estimated that the deficit will amount to 2,500,000*l.*, making a total accumulated deficit of 7,666,000*l.* We have been in office one month, and we are

asked at once to produce our financial scheme. Is this even tolerably fair ? '

But while he thus declined to show his hand as yet to Lord John Russell, Sir Robert Peel had long since been concerting with his friends how best to extricate the country from the ruinous embarrassments of Whig finance.

His own bold project for this purpose was an Income Tax, familiar now, but never before imposed in time of peace. On the practicability of such an impost he consulted first the friend who was shortly to become his Chancellor of the Exchequer.

From Mr. Goulburn.

Betchworth : July 22, 1841.

I have considered the subject which you confidentially referred to me.

There would, no doubt, be great advantage in many points of view in meeting the present financial difficulties of the country by the imposition of an Income Tax.

By exempting, either totally or partially, from its operation those classes of income which were relieved when the tax was formerly in use, the direct operation of the tax would be on the wealthier classes only.

It is difficult without access to official information to form an estimate of the taxable income of the United Kingdom, but I cannot put it lower than from 180 to 200 millions.

I think, therefore, that a tax of two and a half per cent., or sixpence in the pound, would produce a sum of from four to five millions. Such an amount would be more than is necessary for the immediate exigency of the present case. It is nevertheless wise to have a margin, and a surplus, applicable either to the reduction of debt, or to supply deficiencies of revenue occasioned by experimental reductions of taxation, with a view to relieve the suffering classes, or to increase consumption.

But we must now look at the objections.

First and foremost is the unpopularity of such a tax, arising mainly from two causes: the necessity which it

imposes of a direct pecuniary payment, and of disclosing each man's annual income. The country has never yet submitted to this tax in times of peace. It resisted its continuance even for a year in 1816; and I entertain great doubts whether there is virtue enough in a Reformed House of Commons to admit of such a measure being carried, except under the pressure of war expenditure.

We must recollect also that by extending the measure to Ireland—and Ireland could not on any just principle be exempted from it—you add to the outcry against the tax, and deprive yourself of that support which former Governments have had, in the readiness with which the Irish members consented to impose upon Great Britain taxes from which they were to be themselves exempted.

The measure, however, would not only be unpopular. It could only be carried into effect by very detailed and complicated enactments. The Bill could not consist of less than 250 clauses; and as the discussion would run into the question of a graduated scale, and exemption of certain classes, the task of getting it through Committee would be awful, and perhaps impossible.

These strike me as the principal topics of consideration, before you decide upon the adoption or rejection of the Income Tax as a means of supplying the deficiency of revenue.

Sir Robert Peel replied with decision :

Drayton Manor : July 28, 1841.

Your letter states very clearly the comparative advantages and disadvantages of an income tax. In point of reason and sound policy, the former in my opinion preponderate.

We will, of course, say nothing whatever on the subject, though, as my belief is, that 'to this complexion we must come at last,' we may as well be turning the subject in our minds, and laying the foundations for at least full consideration.

The next friend consulted agreed with Goulburn, but drew attention to another side of the financial question, the possibilities of retrenchment.

From Sir James Graham.

Cowes: Aug. 1, 1841.

I have read Goulburn's letter with anxious attention. He states the whole case with great precision, and opens the enlarged views which must ultimately be taken of the resources and taxation of the country.

But before any great final decision be adopted, and the fate of the new Government risked on a plan of finance deliberately matured, the whole expenditure of the country should be carefully revised, the state of our foreign relations ascertained, and the tariff examined, in the spirit of extending to consumers relief from every impost which is not productive as a source of revenue.

Independently of the Army, Navy, and Ordnance, the whole expenditure of our Revenue Boards, and all the charges included in the Miscellaneous Estimates, should undergo a searching scrutiny with the view of effecting every possible reduction.

Then with respect to the scale of our Naval and Military Establishments, everything must depend on our relations with France and the United States.

The removal of Palmerston from our Foreign Office will itself be the termination of one great cause of irritation and national offence; and if you succeed in placing our relations with France on a friendly footing, some saving may be effected in our naval expenditure.

The questions pending with the United States are of a more urgent nature; and must be brought to a speedy issue.

If, however, you are able to secure peace and to reduce both expenditure and establishments, still the income of the country and the general scheme of taxation require adjustment. Your success in a pacific and economical

policy will have rendered you both strong and popular. Then will be the time to risk something for the sake of placing our finances on a solid basis.

I agree with Goulburn that a large reduction of the duty on Colonial Sugar would lead to a great increase of consumption, and would add to the comfort of the poorest classes. Moreover, the tax on raw cotton every day is becoming more impolitic, as the race of manufacturing industry becomes more close.

It would also be wise to look narrowly into those eleven hundred articles subject to duty which yield only a net annual revenue of 360,000*l*.

If my view be correct, you cannot be in a condition to form a sound judgment for some months after your acceptance of office.

I am afraid you will think I have abused my privilege of suggesting ; but I have written as I would have conversed with you after reading Goulburn's letter, which is a very able one, and proves to me what assistance he will give you as Chancellor of the Exchequer.

Lord Stanley was prepared for some retrenchment and some tariff reforms, but not for an Income Tax, unless 'driven' to it.

From Lord Stanley.

Lathom House : Aug. 7, 1841.

It is quite clear that amidst all the complicated difficulties with which you will have to grapple, that which is the most pressing and essential is the state of the finance of the country.

It is the point on which the present Cabinet have broken down ; it is the point on which their measures have been emphatically condemned ; for they were brought forward, and have been treated, not as great questions of national policy, but as modes of recruiting an exhausted Exchequer. And as their mode of effecting this object has been repu-

diated, so yours must receive a degree of consideration proportioned to the magnitude of the interests involved ; and, I may add, to the bitterness of the criticism to which it is sure to be subjected.

Now, I am disposed to think with Graham, that in your position it would not be fair to expect you to give, on first assuming office, a distinct exposition of the course you should adopt. Some time must be given you to ascertain from official information the real state of our financial condition and prospects.

I should anticipate that some not inconsiderable reductions may be effected in expenditure ; though I think Graham sanguine in anticipating any material diminution in our naval and military expenditure.

It *may* be possible to combine the removal of commercial restrictions with an increase of revenue, and to make considerable reductions in the expense of the Revenue departments, those favourite sources of patronage. But all these things must be the work of time.

I am sorry to find Goulburn, after allowing for some improvement of revenue and diminution of expense, still estimating the permanent annual deficiency at one and a half or two millions. A proved permanent deficiency to this extent would be a foundation strong enough to bear such a superstructure as an income tax ; to which you may be driven, but which I earnestly hope you will not resort to, except upon the most evident necessity.

Goulburn's letter sums up so clearly and so forcibly the objections to the tax, that I will not take up your time by any observations of mine.

If you should be driven to attempt it, I quite concur with him in hoping that you would take such an amount as would leave a good margin applicable to those reductions of Customs duties which, in the first instance at all events, must be attended with loss.

In this sense, and also as bearing on our relations with foreign countries, I think it would be wise to look to coffee, sugar, and timber.

When the change of Government had given access to official information, and Parliament was prorogued, the preparations went on briskly for complete financial reform.

To Mr. Goulburn.

Whitehall: October 20, 1841.

Pray consider the following suggestion. Let us employ in downright earnest the services which we have a right to command from the Board of Treasury. Let us add Gladstone to two or three of the Lords, and appoint an unpaid Commission expressly to revise the charge of collecting the revenue in all its branches. Let that Commission institute personal inquiry, go (as the Board of Admiralty does) personally to the spot, the ports of London and Liverpool for instance, and judge for themselves whether some reductions may not be made.

This is the only effectual way of doing the thing. It will be excellent practice for Junior Lords, make their office of real importance, and enable them hereafter to decide or recommend decision on Treasury cases with much more weight and authority and satisfaction to themselves. What is the *Board* of Treasury for but to do these things?

The very appointment of such a Commission, armed with full authority—as I am prepared to arm them—to disregard all considerations of patronage, and to retain only such appointments and such salaries as may be absolutely requisite in each department, will do great good.

The Revenue Departments will be very unwilling to admit, in answer to a letter or to a minute, that anything is amiss. It will be a different case if called upon personally to justify establishments, and to submit to oral examination.

To Lord Stanley.

Nov. 2, 1841.

I have appointed a Commission, consisting of Lord Granville Somerset, Gladstone, and Pringle, for the purpose of reviewing the whole of the Revenue Establishment, and

considering the means, if any exist, of reducing the charge of collection.

I know not whether you can adopt any similar course with respect to Colonial Establishments. They probably admit of little curtailment. It will, however, be of great advantage to us to prove that, before we resort to taxation, we have thoroughly examined into the means of reducing expenditure in every branch, and with this view I recommend the subject to your attention.

The Board of Trade was early set to work to revise the Tariff.

From Lord Ripon.

Studley Park : Oct. 17, 1841.

All the matters to which your letter refers are in train.

The whole loss of revenue to be provided for would be as follows: French Treaty 300,000*l.*, minor imports 100,000*l.*, sugar 1,500,000*l.*, coffee 200,000*l.*; total 2,100,000*l.*

This sounds formidable; but if you adopt the bold and most judicious plan of finance which you suggested the other day in Downing Street, of a 5,000,000*l.* Property Tax, the thing may be done, and will be done.

By acting upon the same sound principle in future years, I am persuaded you might bring about substantial relief of all classes of the people, taking care to make each future reduction of taxes contingent upon the proved success of its predecessor.

It was soon resolved, if Parliament would grant an income tax for a few years, to make at once substantial reductions of duties on corn, meat, sugar, and other articles of chief necessity, and to retain for home producers only moderate protection.

To Lord Ripon.

Oct. 19, 1841.

I think the degree of protection your memorandum proposes is too great.

The principle on which we ought to proceed in reviewing the Corn Laws is, to disregard the consideration of future clamour, or extravagant expectations on either side, and to bear in mind as far as we can the permanent and comprehensive interests of the country ; among which encouragement to domestic production occupies a prominent place ; but surely a duty of 1*l.* when the price here is 56*s.* a quarter is more than is requisite.

We must well consider the state of the laws relating to provisions other than corn. We must substitute protection for prohibition, and must set about considering what will constitute fair protection. Live animals, or fresh meat, can surely require no great amount.

Salted provisions—the comparative cost of victualling ships here and at Hamburg, the tendency of our present laws to encourage victualling in foreign ports—should be looked to.

To Mr. Gladstone.

(Most private.)

Whitehall: Oct. 23, 1841.

It will be very important to procure accurate and detailed information with regard to the practical effect of our Provision Laws other than Corn Laws.

We ought in my opinion to substitute protection for prohibition. The main object is to ascertain the amount of protection which domestic interests can fairly require.

I am much inclined to think that the only effectual way of procuring information would be to despatch some person thoroughly conversant with commercial business to the Continent, with directions for his guidance, and instructions to the consuls to procure for him all the information in their power. Pray communicate this to Lord Ripon.

As regards sugar, unfortunately it was not found possible to ensure, in time for the first Budget, a good supply from foreign sources, so that from any reduction of duty the gain would have gone chiefly to West Indian producers. On this account the old duty was for a time retained, giving ground for cavil to opponents.

To Lord Ripon.

Nov. 1, 1841.

We are now arrived at the first of November, and I fear we have not made any advance in settling the foundations of negotiation with Brazil.

Sugar and coffee must be important elements of any comprehensive financial scheme, and it would be very difficult to decide anything satisfactory with respect to the remission of duty on British Colonial produce without considering at the same time the duties on Foreign Colonial produce.

The remission of duty on British, unaccompanied by, any corresponding relaxation with regard to foreign sugar, might merely confirm a monopoly, and give the advantage of lower duty to the producer and not to the consumer. There is too the great question what are the conditions in regard to Slavery which, if acceded to by Brazil, would induce us to admit her produce.

It appears to me that the consideration and decision of these questions must take place without delay.

The few persons outside the Cabinet called into council on finance were Lord Ashburton (head of the great house of Baring and formerly of the Board of Trade), Mr. Herries (Chancellor of the Exchequer under Lord Ripon), and Mr. Gladstone. To them Sir Robert Peel's intentions were confidentially disclosed.

To Mr. Gladstone.

(Secret.)

Oct. 29, 1841.

I send for your perusal the copy of a letter which I recently addressed to Lord Ashburton, and his reply. I shall be very glad if you will direct your attention to the subject.

To Lord Ashburton.

(Confidential.)

Whitehall: October 18, 1841.

The deficit of next year—considering the legacies of war and relations hovering on the verge of war bequeathed to us by the late Government, considering also their

reckless colonial expenditure, and their habit of solving political difficulties by giving or promising money from the British Treasury—will not be less than three millions.

What must be done to meet the deficiency? I will tell you at once the firm impression on my own mind.

I think it would be true policy in this country in the present state of affairs to submit to a *Property Tax* for a given number of years, for the purpose of enabling the Government to make without risk a decisive experiment in the reduction of duty on some of the great articles of consumption, particularly sugar.

I know how startling property tax is, in what is called (but not very justly) the time of peace. I foresee all the difficulties arising in respect to distinctions between property and income, and in respect to the necessary measure of doing 'justice to Ireland' by including her in the law. I know not whether the country, that is a majority in the Houses of Parliament, will submit to a property tax; whether they will not prefer the more captivating scheme of raising revenue by diminishing taxation. What is feasible may differ from what is politic.

But my present impression is, that the wisest course for the country, for the capitalists, for all classes, would be to raise four or five millions for the next five years by a property tax, founded on the principle of the last property tax, and diminish the pressure of taxation on the great articles of consumption.

I would combine with this measure a revision of the existing Corn Law, diminishing any temptations to fraud in the averages by too sudden and extensive variations in the amount of duty on foreign corn; relaxing the amount of protection where it might safely be relaxed; and attempting to reconcile all just protection for agriculture with greater steadiness in the trade, and with the appropriation of some part of the gain to the Exchequer, at the expense of the foreign importer, compensating the latter by diminished risk. I would considerably relax the amount of existing protection on articles of provision.

I am now writing to you in the most unreserved confidence. The impressions I have stated in this letter I have not communicated to the great majority of my colleagues. They are impressions founded rather on the general view of our position, than on a careful and minute consideration of documents not yet completed.

We might fail, and the consequences of failure are all present before me. But the great question is, what is the measure most consistent with sound policy and with the permanent interests of the country?

We might fail in a Property Tax. Shall we ever succeed in raising three millions by taxation on anything but property? The consideration is not merely whether you can carry the measure through the House of Commons, but whether the measure, if carried, will produce the money.

Is not the additional five per cent. [levied by the Whigs] on Customs and Excise, and the [poor] produce of it, a strong indication that you have arrived at the limit of such taxation?

In reply, Ashburton approved unwillingly of a Property Tax as the only adequate resource, but expressed his disbelief in retrenchment, and in tariff reforms.

From Lord Ashburton.

Alverstoke : October 22, 1841.

It is quite clear that the difficulties of your party turn upon your Budget.

It is on this ground that your adversaries are waiting for you. They know that they leave a deficit, which I fear you do not overstate at three millions. With signal bad faith, and the most impudent imposture, they publish that this may be raised without additional taxation. I am not aware that mountebankery on so bold a scale was ever attempted by any party.

At the same time these pretensions increase your difficulties, and indispose a large mass of the public to

listen to men who have to teach that there is no mode of taxing without hurting.

I believe the confidence of the Conservative party will not fail you, and that the House of Commons will give you even a Property Tax.

Three millions are clearly wanted. I conclude that nobody believes in any material saving of expense.

Looking to the question, how these three millions may be raised, I am, first, clearly of opinion that there is little or nothing to be gained by revising the Tariff. I believe in no material improvement from change, either to the revenue or to consumers.

I, secondly, agree with you that a general indiscriminate additional percentage on existing taxation is objectionable, especially where so large a sum is required.

There remains but one of the two following courses: a return to some of the old sources of income, or a property tax in some shape or other.

Salt, leather, coals, beer, houses—these are large objects for taxation. . . . If from any of these articles some portion of your three millions could be had, might it not be made up by doubling the penny on letters, and by colonial timber?

But after passing in review these several expedients, I must confess that I rather come to the conclusion to leave them all alone, and ask for a property tax of five per cent. This would, I suppose, give you seven millions, which would leave a large margin to try experiments to force consumption by reduction of duties.

My objections to a property tax for times of peace are very strong, and only to be overcome by the necessity, nor should I finally adopt it until all other expedients had been well sifted and considered. If taken at all, I should take it at five per cent. A surplus would enable you to hold out the prospect that this tax might only be temporary. It would be next to insupportable to live in a country where such a tax were permanent.

You will not disguise to yourself that the proposal of it in any shape is a most hazardous experiment.

Mr. Gladstone approved warmly of direct taxation, and more commercial freedom, but saw many objections to a Property Tax, and suggested, in preference to it, a revival of the House Tax.

From Mr. Gladstone.

13 Carlton House Terrace : Nov. 4, 1841.

I have read with attention the secret papers which you have placed in my hands. I do not touch on the several questions of commercial treaty. I go to the main propositions of your letter to Lord Ashburton.

I. I have longed for the moment when I might learn that the Government were resolved to meet the present deficit by a large measure of direct taxation, if possible of a temporary kind, and to reserve for themselves thereby a margin for commercial legislation.

It is only in obedience to your invitation that I presume to put the question for consideration, whether there be any measure other than a property tax which would fully attain this end.

Setting aside the merely popular and selfish objections to a property tax, is it not true that—

(1) It encourages evasion, and presses upon the honest, and the inducement to fraud is so direct that we cannot but estimate very highly the moral evil of the tax ;

(2) It is highly inquisitorial, and would be most injurious to credit, the pole of our commercial system, especially if it contemplate the disclosure of capitals and mortgages ;

(3) It requires no inconsiderable machinery ;

(4) It introduces questions with respect to distinctions between property and income, not only difficult from the prejudices and interests they touch, but in themselves almost defying a just and accurate solution ;

(5) It would peculiarly offend the mercantile class ; and

(6) It is of such a nature that all the objections to it apply with the same force to a property tax of one per cent. as to one of twenty per cent., and therefore, one would

apprehend; is only to be adopted when (1) it is intended to take it on such a scale as to make it well worth while to brave all these difficulties, or when (2) it is *impossible* to raise the required revenue by other means?

Is either of these conditions fulfilled? With respect to the required revenue, I take it at three millions for deficiency, and one and a half for commercial margin, in all four and a half millions, by no means such a sum as to answer the first condition, accurately regarded.

With respect to the second, is it impossible to raise the required amount mainly by a House Tax?

II. As regards commercial reductions, it seems to be anticipated that the first considerable reduction is to be made on sugar and coffee.

But the remark of Lord Ashburton appears to me most important, that if you reduce the sugar on duties before enlarging the sources of supply, you will only give so much to the East and West Indies. And I do not see how the sources of supply are to be enlarged in time for any reduction which shall take effect sooner than July 1843. But there are other articles on which perhaps there need be no delay in reducing duty.

After specifying these under seven heads, Mr. Gladstone adds:

The experiments of next year, if in any degree successful, and if no new disaster should occur, would enable you in 1843 to proceed boldly with the sugar duties. I do not apprehend that there are many other changes in the tariff which it would be found desirable to make next year, of a nature materially to affect revenue.

And although these direct repeals of taxes would tend to the relief of trade rather than of the consumer, yet, on the other hand, the labouring classes generally would not be in any perceptible degree affected by the new taxes; and they, and through them the manufacturing interest, would receive an immediate relief from the changes likely to be made in the Corn and Provision Laws.

I assume that your change in the Corn Laws, whatever

it may be, will probably give to importation at 55s. as much facility as it now enjoys at 65s. and that the consumer will therefore gain very greatly.

III. I have prepared a paper on the Corn Laws, but I should wish on no account to submit it to you before I have corrected and shortened it; and only then if you shall deem it worth while to call for it.

To Mr. Gladstone.

Whitehall: Nov. 7, 1841.

I was much obliged by your comments on Lord Ashburton's letter, have read them with great attention, and will well consider them. I shall be obliged if you will also send me the observations on the Corn Laws.

To Lord Ashburton.

Nov. 17, 1841.

I send a memorandum drawn up by Gladstone in reference to direct taxation.

It is very easy to point out the difficulties in the way of any definite proposal for raising four or five millions of money. I think he must on reflection be convinced of this when he comes maturely to consider his own plan of a house tax.

There never would be such panegyrics on a property tax as a heavy house tax would elicit. It would really invest a property tax with a dangerous degree of popularity.

Sir Robert Peel referred also to the Board of Trade the important questions of negotiation for reciprocity, and of substantial reduction in the oppressive duties on timber which Ashburton had proposed to increase.

To Lord Ripon.

Nov. 17, 1841.

Have you considered whether it would be possible to connect with any alteration in our system of Corn Laws a preference to those countries which might be willing to admit on more favoured terms our manufactures?

From Lord Ripon.

Board of Trade : Nov. 17, 1841.

As to making the relaxation of the Corn Law a matter of negotiation with foreign Powers, with a view to obtain concessions from them in favour of our manufactures, I confess I have great doubts of the policy.

It appears to me that the question of the Corn Laws, involving the actual subsistence of the people, is a separate affair from commercial questions in their ordinary sense ; and I fear that we might be involved in serious evils if we were to bind ourselves by treaty to any specific relaxation of our laws.

To Lord Ripon.

Nov. 22, 1841.

Timber Duties.—If we can get a surplus of revenue, may we not try with advantage an extensive reduction of duties both on colonial and foreign timber ?

This might be done without disturbing the degree of protection given to the former by the existing duties. But may we not safely disturb, by diminishing, that protection, particularly if we can give increased facilities for the admission of North American corn ?

The timber duties were reduced by no less than 600,000*l.*, and the sliding scale was revised so as to lower considerably the tax on corn.

From Lord Ripon.

Board of Trade : Nov. 26, 1841.

Don't you think it would be well to ask the Duke of Buckingham to join Graham, Knatchbull, and myself in our consideration of the average question ?

To Lord Ripon.

(*Confidential.*)

Nov. 30, 1841.

You should distinctly inform the Duke of Buckingham that the Committee on averages must not be considered to imply any opinion that the remainder of the Corn Laws

requires no revision or alteration ; on the contrary, you know that the subject of the graduated duty generally has been under my consideration ; and you have a strong impression, in which you have reason to believe that I entirely concur, that there are other parts of the Corn Law which require serious attention.

Lord Ripon's Chancellor of the Exchequer, when consulted, wrote strongly in favour of a property tax.

From Mr. Herries.

Nov. 8, 1841.

It has very long been my conviction that the burdens on this country, consisting in so great a degree as they do of the charges of an accumulated debt, ought to be defrayed in a greater proportion by contributions drawn from accumulated wealth, and that the very great preponderance assigned in our system of taxation to the duties falling upon industry and consumption was not only impolitic but unsustainable.

I was so deeply impressed with this belief when I held the office of Chancellor of the Exchequer, that I had then formed the determination, with the entire concurrence of Huskisson and Lord Ripon, to propose a Property Tax, by way of commutation for some of the other existing taxes which appeared to be most obstructive to the industry of the country.

The change of Ministry put an end to these plans ; but I have never ceased to think that they were right in principle, and I am strongly persuaded that had they been adopted, the crisis in which we are now involved would have been averted.

Lord Spencer indeed made a great mistake, when he remitted the house duty, and imposed, *inter alia*, a tax on raw cotton. He was moving precisely in the wrong direction.

With respect to the house tax, so much insisted upon

by one of your correspondents, it is much easier to wish that it had never been abandoned than to show that it would be wise or practicable at the present time to re-establish it.

The Home Secretary supported an Income Tax in preference to a House Tax, but both he and Lord Ashburton were less inclined than they had been eight years before to give up protection of home-grown corn.

From Sir James Graham.

Nov. 14, 1841.

I return Gladstone's letter. You would find his House Tax more difficult to carry than an Income Tax. It would not yield the amount required, and his proposed measures in aid, one and all, are most objectionable. Each would excite as much opposition as an income tax, thereby multiplying the points of attack, and the risks of fatal defeat.

Memorandum on the Corn Laws 1841 by Lord Ashburton.

(Extract.)

I cannot doubt that there must and should be some change, and that it should come from the Cabinet. Corn Laws and Free Trade will be the great battle-field of the Session.

I am aware to what extent our Conservative party is a party pledged to the support of the land, and that, that principle abandoned, the party is dissolved. I am also convinced that protection is the true honest policy for the country, and for all its interests, the extent and the mode being the only subjects of doubt.

The experience we have had of our present law brings upon me the conviction that it is *rather* too tight as to extent of protection, and defective in its machinery as a regulator, and as preventing frauds. In relaxation of tightness, I should like to see some but not much change. If I were

to endeavour to state the extent in figures, I should say about five shillings for wheat, but certainly not more.

From Sir James Graham.

Dec. 12, 1841.

I am well satisfied on the whole with Lord Ashburton's memorandum.

His arguments in favour of protection are sound, and the object which he seeks appears to me legitimate, namely, average of price between 50s. and 60s. for the quarter of wheat, in common years.

In 1833, when I drew the Report of the Agricultural Committee, I did believe that the growth of the population had outstripped our native means of producing bread corn ; and that opinion is asserted in the Report. The experience of subsequent years has shaken this belief. From 1832 to 1837 the importation of wheat was unnecessary. Moreover draining and deep ploughing, and the use of artificial manures, and steam navigation on our coasts, bringing fat meat to markets from districts whence lean cattle only were sent, have so added to improved husbandry and the growth of wheat, that in average seasons I do believe the increased supply has kept pace with the increase of the population.

Lord Ashburton agreed with me in 1833, when I affirmed the contrary proposition : I now agree with him in the modification or even change of this opinion. So dangerous is it to dogmatise in matters of this highly speculative character !

I return Gladstone's letter. I dislike the proposal of the tax on Iron, a raw material, which enters largely into our export trade ; and the 'analogy of the tax on Cotton Wool' is not attractive.

It is of interest to observe that all this time Sir Robert Peel had not, as has been generally assumed, been guided by the recommendations of a recent Select Committee, though he was moving on lines similar to theirs.

To Mr. Goulburn.

Dec. 18, 1841.

I have not read a particle of the Report on Import Duties, or of the evidence taken before the Committee, and I have never, directly or indirectly, given an opinion with reference to the course to be taken in consequence of that Report. I was not on the Committee.

The following are miscellaneous papers of the year.

To Sir James Graham.

Sept. 5, 1841.

Would it not be advisable carefully to take all the specific allegations of extreme privation from the speeches of Bowring, Villiers, Cobden &c. and cause immediate inquiry to be made into the truth of them? For instance, the horrible story of the man who in the midst of his family was found dead on his loom. Who was the relieving officer? Why did he neglect his duty?

Cabinet Memorandum.

Sept. 24, 1841.

The Select Committee appointed to take into consideration the promotion of the Fine Arts in connection with the rebuilding of the Houses of Parliament, report that they had been compelled to conclude their inquiry without the examination of many witnesses of high reputation; and unless the Government interfere, a motion will probably be made for a renewal of the Committee.

But Committees of this kind, however plausibly constituted, are too apt to fall into the hands of a few active individuals, whose own opinion on the subjects they undertake is of little weight, and who act under the influence of scheming artists and speculators out of doors.

I am inclined to recommend that the Crown should appoint a Commission, consisting of members of each House of Parliament, selected with reference to the interest

they may take in inquiries of this nature, or to their supposed qualifications for conducting them.

But this Commission should include three or four artists of eminence, such as Sir Francis Chantrey, Mr. Eastlake, and men of this class, and one or two unprofessional gentlemen who are not in Parliament, but who exercise an influence in matters of taste.

On this the Duke of Wellington writes :

I quite concur in Sir Robert Peel's notion of a Commission rather than a Committee. Sir Robert Peel had better select the members. He knows the artists better than I do, and will know best of what persons the Commission ought to be composed.

To a suggestion that Lord Francis Egerton should be called to the Upper House, Sir Robert Peel replied in terms which show the grave apprehensions entertained of disturbances in the North excited by the Chartists, the Irish, and the Anti-Corn-Law League.

To Mr. Arbuthnot.

(Private.)

Whitehall: Sept. 29, 1841.

On Monday last, Sir James Graham brought to me a letter from Mr. Charles Shaw, who is at the head of the police in Manchester. It stated that preparations on a great scale were making for an immense meeting at Manchester for the following day, for the reception of Feargus O'Connor.

It described a very extensive system of confederacy, extending through all the populous district in the neighbourhood of Manchester; spoke of the possibility that on the very next day there might be a congregation of 100,000 persons poured into Manchester; anticipated a probable conflict between the Chartists and the Irish; said that each party was arming for it, that the troops would be ordered to their barracks, to be ready for decided and

combined support to the civil power, and that in the meantime he had only two hundred policemen for the maintenance of the public peace.

Now, with this account in our possession, with the attempts making by the Anti-Corn-Law League to inflame the people, should we be justified in affording such an opportunity for excitement as an election for South Lancashire ?

On November 9 the Queen gave birth to a son and heir, and Sir Robert Peel wrote to announce the glad news to the Queen Dowager, then lying dangerously ill.

From Lord Howe.

Sudbury: Tuesday, 11 at night, Nov. 9, 1841.

The enclosed touching letter is a far better answer to your joyful news than anything I can write. The poor Queen added, ' This is the best medicine you could give me.'

May God grant this happiness come not too late !

Enclosure, in pencil, from the Queen Dowager.

Dear Sir Robert,—Though still very weak, I cannot refrain to thank you for the happy news which will revive me, and to say that I wish you joy, and share in the joy of the whole nation, in so prosperous an event with all my heart. God bless and protect the Queen and the Prince of Wales !

Ever most gratefully and sincerely yours,

ADELAIDE.

On Lord Howe's letter is endorsed :

I requested Prince Albert to read the enclosed, from Queen Adelaide, to the Queen. He did so, and returned me the letter, observing that the Queen was much affected by it.

R. P.

A letter to the Colonial Minister shows how careful Sir Robert Peel was to consult the leader of the Upper House about all appointments of peers.

To Lord Stanley.

Dec. 29, 1841.

I think your selection of Lord Clare for the government of Jamaica a very judicious one.

I wish you would mention it to the Duke of Wellington. Whenever I have thought of a peer for any office, I have communicated privately with the Duke, on account of his position in the House of Lords.

We feared, previously to the meeting of the Cabinet, that he was not quite satisfied with his relation to the Government. This is not unnatural; for although it was his own choice after deliberate consideration, although his reason told him that it would be unwise to undertake very active and laborious office (and he would consent to no other) in conjunction with the lead of the House of Lords, yet still the contrast between his present position and the prominent part which when in office he has been used to take, is occasionally painful to him.

I think he would be flattered by your writing to him, and that he will entirely approve of Lord Clare.

I write to you without the slightest reserve, being very confident you will justly appreciate my motive.

Much interest attaches to the correspondence with Mr. Gladstone. His first letter after accepting office at the Board of Trade is remarkable as expressing much diffidence from ignorance of commercial business, and some disrelish for future promotion in the line in which he afterwards became unrivalled. His rare capacity for finance was discerned by Sir Robert Peel perhaps earlier than by himself. Or was it that his prudent chief selected this as the safest department in which to train the exuberant energies of his still youthful colleague?

From Mr. Gladstone.

13 Carlton House Terrace : Sept. 1, 1841.

I have reflected much upon the protestations of ignorance and unfitness offered by me yesterday, and on the various

portions of the conversation which you held with me : it is that reflection which induces me to trouble you, not with any view of disturbing, so far as I am concerned, the arrangement so kindly proposed by you and already in effect concluded, but with respect to anticipations which you may possibly entertain.

It is presumptuous, I fear, on my part to contemplate in any form the notion that I might hereafter be deemed fit for official advancement. I do it only because you yourself were pleased to allude to the present appointment as one which might furnish a proper discipline and an advantageous introduction to others at a future, probably a distant period ; those other employments, as I have been led to infer, being likewise connected with the trade or the finance of the country.

Now I do not revive the allegation of incapacity. I am highly honoured by your committing to me an office of very great trust, responsibility, and importance ; earnestly desirous to repay your confidence with diligent and faithful service ; and thoroughly willing to be instructed in the duties of Vice-President of the Board of Trade, and to labour in them as long as you shall continue to desire that they should remain in my hands. I highly value the opportunity which will be afforded me of becoming acquainted with the commercial resources of the country.

At the same time, and with reference to the general course of my life, past and future, I feel that all my habits of thought and action have been so far cast in a different mould, and have attained such a degree of fixedness, that I should find it hardly practicable to give myself to questions of trade and of finance in a manner and degree befitting the expectation that they are hereafter permanently to form my staple occupation. I have never but once sat on a Committee of Trade, and have never spoken on any question of trade excepting one, during nine years for which I have sat in Parliament. . . . I do not despair of discharging without absolute discredit to you the duties which may devolve upon me as Vice-President ; but neither

my habits up to the present time nor (it is fair to add) the general nature of the objects with which I have entered and remain in public life, would allow me to hope to fit myself for handling at any time these weighty and essential matters in such a way as the interests of the country would demand from those charged with the chief care and responsibility in their management.

Sir Robert Peel replies :

I write a line, necessarily a very hurried one, to acknowledge your letter, and to assure you that it does not in the slightest degree abate my earnest desire to have your aid in the Department which I mentioned to you. Your nomination gives the utmost satisfaction to Lord Ripon.

In another letter Mr. Gladstone defends himself at great length from the charge of serving under a leader from whose religious and political views he greatly differed.

(*Private.*)

13 Carlton House Terrace : Sunday, Oct. 17, 1841.

I have never noticed the many charges of extreme and even monstrous tenets which have been made against me for years past, unless by such summary and unexplained disclaimers in the House of Commons as direct attacks in debate may have demanded. Nor will I now go into any detailed statement. . . . My purpose is only to show that I am not now serving under you with political views which to my knowledge differ from your own. . . .

I have been held up to view by persons of note as well as respectability—for instance by Mr. Macaulay—as being an object of hope to those unbending Tories who are not contented with the moderate and cautious character of their leader. Such persons, I conceive, cannot repose their hopes in me ; for I regard you as holding the conviction that it is (humanly speaking) possible to adjust the ancient and noble institutions of this country to the wants and necessities of this unquiet time, without departure from those fundamental principles, not which theory but which

history ascribes to them ; as having the rarest discernment of the manner in which such adjustment is to be effected ; as having resolution to adhere to principle which you believe to be such, and the perhaps still greater courage to divest of the cover and shelter of the name of principle such matter as you do not hold entitled to it, and as is rightfully subject to the ordinary and more flexible rules of politics. . . .

I cannot be a judge in any sense of more than I have seen and comprehended of you politically ; but to that I subscribe, perhaps as unreservedly as it is practicable for one man to subscribe on a large scale to the acts and sentiments of another standing on an infinitely higher level. And I am certain that, if I misunderstand you, it is my own fault alone. . . .

I do not conceal from myself that upon a religious question which to my mind appears great I have no sufficient warrant to presume that my views are in unison with yours. . . . Singularly faithful as (in my humble view) you have been to the convictions with which you were early imbued, I feel that the circumstances of the period in which I have been brought up have developed new necessities, have opened in consequence some veins of inquiry, and have tended to bring out into distinct forms some doctrines of the Church which previously were more or less latent and inactive in the minds of her members ; and if (without aspiring to it in any other particular) I am to emulate you at least in the fidelity to which I have adverted, I cannot set aside the conviction that the ultimate strength of the Church lies in that historical charter, a part of the Gospel itself, under which she has ever acted. . . .

In what I have said of the signal adaptation of your opinions and temperament to the immense difficulties of this period, I have endeavoured, perhaps at the hazard of an appearance of defective perception and appreciation, rigorously to avoid whatever might be capable of being construed into gratuitous flattery, and to limit myself to the presumed necessity of the case. . . .

Should party spirit run very high against your commercial measures, I have no doubt that the venom of my religious opinions will be plentifully alleged to have infused itself into your policy even in that direction . . . and more than ever will be heard of your culpability in taking into office a person of my bigoted and extreme sentiments. . . .

You need not fear that this letter indicates an intention on my part to deviate from the line of those duties which I have undertaken. It is not difficult to comprehend their character and my position, or to perceive that I am bound in all official relations sedulously to conform to it.

To Mr. Gladstone.

Oct. 19, 1841.

So little did I think of the paragraph in the 'Morning Advertiser,' that I did not take the trouble to read it, not from any indifference to your good opinion, but from the conviction, from Fremantle's account of it, that it was the mere offspring of malevolence and wilful misrepresentation.

I am too much habituated to the effusions that are derived from those impure sources to attach the slightest credit or importance to them.

Besides this, I had read the works from which a mischievous industry had attempted to collect the means of attacking and defaming you; and it really never crossed my mind that they contained anything whatever implying in the most distant manner any reflection upon me or my opinions, or incapacitating you from cordial co-operation with me in public life.

As to the Church, my conviction is that both you and I are actuated by the highest feelings for the institution, devotion to her true and permanent interests, and the desire to extend as far as possible her ministrations together with her hold upon the love and affections of the people.

Men influenced by such feelings may occasionally differ upon the best practical method of giving effect to their common views. But if differences on such points are to

lead to alienation and distrust and ill will, the holiest and the best course will be subject to disadvantages to which no other course is subject.

Believe me, my dear Gladstone, with an esteem and regard which are proof against evil-minded attempts to sow jealousy and discord,

Most faithfully yours,

ROBERT PEEL.

From this high level the correspondence, still copious and confidential, descends to the humbler subjects, treated earlier in the chapter, of tariff and of trade.

CHAPTER XVIII.

1842.

Sport in Windsor Park—Protectionist Resignations—Justice to Ireland—
Producer and Consumer—Education—Mining Reform—Wellington
Commander-in-Chief—Royal Visit to Scotland—Fears of Violence—
Enthusiastic Loyalty—Recess Correspondence—Prime Minister and
Home Secretary—‘The next Change in the Corn Law.’

It does not appear that the Prime Minister found time this winter to shoot his covers, but before Parliament met he had one chance of brief indulgence in his favourite pastime, so unexpected that the garb in which he enjoyed it moved his mirth. The bag was worthy of a more sportsmanlike costume.

To Mr. Croker.

Jan. 1842.

In thin shoes, pepper-and-salt pantaloons, and a long blue frock coat, with borrowed gun and apparatus of all kinds, I had the honour of accompanying Prince Albert at a *chasse*, which lasted an hour and a half, in Windsor Park. The result was eighteen pheasants, sixteen hares, fifty-one rabbits, and one partridge.

From Windsor he returned to official cares, to work out his financial policy, and to supply the places of agricultural colleagues, driven to resignation by his first steps towards free trade in meat and corn. The Duke of Buckingham left the Cabinet, and Lord Hardwicke the Household. On the other hand Mr. Estcourt (Member for Oxford University) and Mr. Gladstone were ready to advance more boldly than their leaders.

To Sir James Graham.

Jan. 2, 1842.

With the exception of the projects of the Anti-Corn-Law League, this [proposal from Estcourt] is the most liberal plan of all for settling the Corn Law question—unlimited admission of foreign corn free of duty when the average of British corn shall reach 52s. per quarter. You may send it to Ripon, Stanley, and Gladstone.

From Mr. Gladstone.

Jan. 11, 1842.

The effect produced on me by such inquiries as I am able to make is, I confess, gradually to reduce my estimate of the measure of protection necessary for the full support of British agriculture, and to make me feel more and more its natural intrinsic strength.

The Duke of Richmond declined to take the place vacated by the Duke of Buckingham ; the Duke of Buccleuch consented.

From Lord Stanley.

(*Secret.*)

Jan. 30, 1842.

I saw the Duke of Richmond last night. He places his positive determination not to accept any office upon the ground of his health.

He is most friendly, and willing out of office to give us any support he can. He told us that the result of the Duke of Buckingham's secession would be that he should be obliged to speak more favourably of our measure than he should otherwise have done.

To the Duke of Wellington.

Feb. 1, 1842.

I have seen the Duke of Buccleuch. I asked him to read my memoranda on the Corn Laws before he gave me an answer respecting the offer of Lord Privy Seal.

He has read them, and will accept.

Parliament met on Thursday, February 3, and on the following Sunday Mr. Gladstone, who had serious doubts whether the revised scale for corn would sufficiently relieve the consumer, agreed nevertheless to give it loyal support.

From Lord Ripon.

(Confidential.)

Board of Trade : Feb. 2, 1842.

Gladstone has just put the accompanying two papers into my hands. They are ably reasoned, as all that comes from him is; but I think they almost prove too much, because their tendency is to show that the [revised] sliding scale never admits foreign corn till the lowest duty is approached, or nearly so.

From Mr. Gladstone.

13 Carlton House Terrace : Sunday, Feb. 6, 1842.

My doubts upon the abstract question, how the scale will operate with respect to the relief of the *consumer*, will be kept profoundly secret. Upon a view of the whole case, I trust I may be enabled to give the measure an honourable and firm, or, to use your own expression, a cordial support.

To Lord De Grey.

Feb. 6, 1842.

The Duke of Buckingham remained to the last on cordial terms with us, professed the greatest gratitude for the consideration with which he had been treated, and ultimately retired, not, in my opinion, because he differed from us, but because he was haunted by the recollection of pledges given at farmers' dinners, in the capacity he assumed of being especially the farmers' friend.

He takes the Garter, and declares his desire to support us on every other question than Corn. I doubt, however, whether he will long remain proof against the influences by which he is surrounded.

Lord Hardwicke, though willing to support the Corn Bill, withdrew from office, in spite of remonstrance.

To Lord Hardwicke.

Feb. 13, 1842.

I am gratified by the assurance that on reflection you find yourself enabled to give a cordial support to the measure I have proposed in reference to the Corn Laws.

Your resignation at this moment could not possibly be of any advantage.

Independently of any public considerations, influenced by feelings of private friendship and regard, let me entreat you to consider whether a public man does not place himself in an embarrassing if not somewhat ridiculous position by resigning office on account of a measure which he is unwilling actively to oppose.

The question is immediately asked, If you do not oppose in good earnest, why did you intimate that degree of dissatisfaction which is implied by resignation at a critical period?

I would strongly recommend you, from my experience in public life, to relinquish the idea of resignation.

To the Duke of Wellington.

Feb. 17, 1842.

I suppose Lord Hardwicke will resign. There really is no pretence for it, but still I would not advise us to press him too much. I will confer with you in respect to the selection of a successor.

From the Duke of Wellington.

Feb. 17, 1842.

It appears to me that you cannot do more than you have done to induce him to withdraw the resignation. If he would only wait a while to see the effect of the Duke of Buckingham's taking the Garter, he would see the folly of following his example. Both will be the ridicule of the whole nation.

While Protectionist Ministers were resigning on account of the duties being lowered on corn and cattle, and farmers were

grumbling, the League founded in 1839 were bent on repealing at one stroke the whole Corn Law.

In 1815, when it was first imposed by Robinson (now Ripon), he had been mobbed in Palace Yard. Now the case was different. The Prime Minister was generally believed¹ to be in principle a free trader. The question was, how much exceptional consideration he would think due to the great industry of agriculture, strongly represented in his Cabinet and party, as against the manufacturing and other interests drawn up for battle in the League. This being uncertain, 'the League,' says Mr. Morley, 'resolved that they would leave nothing undone to support or overcome the Prime Minister.' They sent up hundreds of delegates to Westminster, and when Sir Robert Peel, pleading engagements, declined to receive them, 'the deputies thronged down to the House of Commons with something so like tumult, that the police turned them out and cleared the lobbies. As they crowded round the approaches to the House, the irritated men hailed with abusive names those whom they knew to be champions of the abhorred monopoly.'

On Feb. 9, the Minister having introduced his Corn Bill, Cobden, who had been elected to Parliament, 'wound up the proceedings by denouncing the proposed measure as a bitter insult to a suffering nation.'

This gave the populace their cue. 'Peel's effigy was carried on gibbets through the streets, and then amid the execration of the multitude hurled into the flames, while the crowd shouted their prayer that so might all the oppressors of the people perish.'²

In arranging the income tax, the difficulty of 'doing justice to Ireland' was found formidable. Ireland had not been subject to this tax during the war, and had no machinery for collecting it. On these grounds Sir Robert Peel exempted the Irish, except absentee landlords, from property tax, but raised the Irish duties on spirits and on stamps to the same rates as were levied in Scotland. Mr. Herries, who was consulted, had put strongly the injustice and impolicy of this exemption.

¹ 'Peel is a Free Trader, and so are Ripon and Gladstone.' R. Cobden to F. Cobden, June 22, 1842.

² Morley's *Cobden*, i. 217-221.

Mr. Herries to Sir James Graham.

March 2, 1842.

Your question as to exempting Ireland from the proposed tax on Property took me very much by surprise.

I had always contemplated the reimposition of a property tax as being to be borne uniformly by all property of the same description in every part of the United Kingdom. And the more I have thought upon the subject, the less can I reconcile my judgment to the justice, or the policy, of omitting Ireland from its due share of contribution.

I know nothing of the feelings of the English landlords, capitalists, or professional men, on such a subject, but I should apprehend that they would not be easily reconciled to bear the whole burden of this imposition by the consideration of the indirect taxes which you propose to create in Ireland, consisting chiefly of alterations which will only bring Ireland more nearly to the level of England with regard to those very taxes.

The British tax-payer will naturally ask: 'What are to be the limits of this system of distinction in taxation between the two portions of the British Empire?'

The objections are all upon the surface, and must have been fully considered, before you adopted your present resolution. The answers to them are, however, not equally obvious.

The only two points which you mentioned to me—viz. first, the difficulty of establishing a machinery in Ireland for the collection of an income tax, and secondly, that of persuading the Irish members to submit to it—do not appear to me to be sufficient to outweigh considerations of so much magnitude.

The latter is I dare say the substantial impediment which you have to grapple with. I remember Lord Londonderry bore testimony to the weight of it, when there was a question at the close of the war of continuing a modified property tax. He felt the difficulty of imposing

it on Ireland. But he also felt, if I mistake not, that without that condition it ought not to be reimposed at all.

On March 11, Sir Robert Peel made his general financial statement; and on March 18 began, as he had foreseen, obstinate resistance to the tax on which his whole fiscal policy was based.

Foremost in impeding were Lord John Russell and the Whigs. 'I was confident,' said Peel, 'that my chief opponents would be those who had involved the country in difficulties.'

But not less hostile were the League. Clamouring for relief from indirect, they also opposed direct taxation. 'How do our millowners and shopkeepers like,' wrote Cobden, 'to be made to pay 1,200,000*l.* a year out of their profits, to secure the continuance of the corn and sugar duties?' Such was his version of Peel's new policy. 'The income tax will do more than the Corn Law to destroy the Tories.' Such was his forecast of the future. 'Cobden was one of a small group who persisted in obstructive motions for adjournment.'³ Such was his parliamentary action.

Yet 'the financial policy of 1842,' writes his biographer, 'was the beginning of all the great things that have been done since. Its cardinal point was the imposition of a direct tax, in order to relax the commercial tariff. It was expedient or indispensable for the revival of trade to lower or remit duties.'⁴

Why then did Cobden, happily in vain, use every effort to defeat the tax without which, at the time, no remission was possible, total or partial, of protective duties?

Peel's reform of 1842, no doubt, was only 'the beginning.' 'It left bread and sugar burdened with heavy protective taxation.' But well begun is half done. 'The general principle Sir Robert Peel went on,' says Mr. Morley, 'was to make a considerable reduction in the cost of living. The duty on fresh and salted meat was lowered. He could point to the new Corn Bill as having reduced the duty on wheat by more than a half. While he spoke, it was nine shillings under the new law, and twenty-three under the old one.'⁵

Time was wasted in futile obstruction, but the majority held well together. In spite of the Whigs, the means were voted for

³ Morley's *Cobden*, i. 240-243.

⁴ *Ibid.* i. 237.

⁵ *Ibid.* i. 238.

making good their deficits ; in spite of Cobden, the broad foundation was laid on which were built the great tariff reforms of 1842 and 1845, the repeal of the Corn Laws in 1846, and Mr. Gladstone's further free trade measures of later years. Peel's financial policy triumphed over all opponents. Far from 'destroying the Tories,' it remains to this day to their credit, that their leader first proposed, and they first carried, against Whigs and Radicals, an income tax in time of peace, a new departure in taxation, never before attempted, never since reversed.

The following letters relate to business in the House of Commons.

From Mr. Anson.

(Private.)

Claremont : Sept. 9, 1841.

The Queen would wish you always to send after the debates, or other business of interest, a short report of what has taken place. Her Majesty would wish the Duke of Wellington to do the same thing in the House of Lords. I do not know whether this has been usual in former days with you, but it has always been her Majesty's habit to receive this early intelligence from the leader in each House.

Sir Robert Peel replies :

Both the Duke of Wellington and I fully intended to make a report to her Majesty after the close of the parliamentary business of each day, and will do so without fail.

To the Queen.

Whitehall : Monday night, half-past one, Feb. 15, 1842.

Sir Robert Peel, with his humble duty to your Majesty, begs leave to acquaint your Majesty that Lord John Russell proposed this evening a resolution condemnatory of the principle of the plan for the adjustment of the Corn Laws brought forward by your Majesty's servants.

Lord John Russell was followed in the debate by Mr. Gladstone, the Vice-President of the Board of Trade, who vindicated the plan.

Sir Robert Peel thinks that the resolution will be negatived by a very considerable majority.

Sir Robert Peel had a meeting yesterday of the friends of the Government in the House of Commons, and he is convinced that, although many may have wished that the plan of the Government had given an increased degree of protection to agriculture, the great body will support the measure, and that he shall have no difficulty in resisting any detached efforts that may be made to add to the duties on foreign corn.

Feb. 16.—Sir Robert Peel thinks that the majority against the resolution of Lord John Russell will exceed one hundred.

Feb. 17.—The majority in favour of Government was larger than Sir Robert Peel had anticipated. There were in favour of the resolution 226, against it 347; majority 123.

March 20.—Sir Robert Peel begs leave to acquaint your Majesty that the proceedings respecting the Income Tax were interrupted last night by vexatious motions for adjournment. Those motions were negatived by very large majorities, but, as is almost uniformly the case, from the power which a minority possesses to repeat similar motions without limit, it became necessary to give way to them.

March 24.—Sir Robert Peel begs to acquaint your Majesty that the vexatious system of adjournment was again resorted to last night, and with the usual effect, of preventing a decision.

April 3.—Sir Robert Peel has the satisfaction of acquainting your Majesty that the second reading of the Income Tax Bill was at length carried last night, after a debate which created little interest, and in a House which was comparatively thinly attended. The numbers were for the second reading of the Bill 155, against it 76; a majority of more than two to one.

Many letters of this year show Sir Robert Peel's conviction that neither the proposed reduction of duty on corn, nor

permission to import foreign meat, would seriously hurt the British farmer; and, even if it did, that regard must be had to the interest of consumers.

To the Marquis of Ailsa.

March 28, 1842.

Suppose all should occur which you anticipate, from the reduction of the duty on oats and from permitting the import of foreign meat, will there be no compensation, in getting access on reasonable terms to the superior oats of which you speak, and in paying something less than eightpence or ninepence a pound for beef?

Whatever the future may be, no one can think the present state of things very satisfactory. If I were a landed proprietor in the West of Scotland, and saw 17,000 persons supported during the winter, as in one Scotch town, Paisley, by charitable contributions, I should seriously inquire whether the continuance of such a state of things was quite compatible with the security, or at least the enjoyment, of property.

To Mr. Arbuthnot.

April 5, 1842.

It seems to me that the apprehensions in respect to the import of foreign cattle, fat or lean, are quite groundless. There were 174,000 head of cattle sold in Smithfield alone last year. If 10,000 head of cattle should cross the sea from foreign parts, I shall be very much surprised, but I must fairly say I hope they may. I think the price of meat unduly high.

It is said, 'True, but there has been a murrain among cattle.'

Is it possible to maintain that we shall be subject to such misfortunes as murrain among cattle, subject to the high price consequent upon it, and yet continue prohibition of import on wholesome meat from abroad?

To Lord Hardwicke.

April 9, 1842.

‘Our market was good to-day, and both wheat and barley have risen in price, and the farmer does not say a word about Corn laws to-day.’

Now, my good friend, if we wait a little, and calmly consider what is the prospect of competition with fat bullocks or fresh meat to be brought by sea from Hamburg or from some Baltic port, is it not probable that the same consequences will follow, and that the farmer will find that he has been needlessly frightened, and that if he has been selling his stock at any reduced prices for fear of foreign bullocks, sheep, or cows, fat or lean, he has been making a bad bargain?

To Sir James Graham.

July 25, 1842.

I agree with you, that we must advance in our present course of relaxation. Butter and cheese must share the fate of other articles of consumption. The Sugar question we must most carefully and seriously consider.

I have frightened Bunsen out of his wits by the language I have held with regard to the German tariff, and by telling him that we would give a preference to American produce, unless Prussia and the States she can influence follow reciprocally our example of liberality towards them.

I have told him that there never was such an act of insanity—after the visit of the King of Prussia to this country, and after the recent acts of France and Belgium—as meditating a retrograde step at this moment in respect to the import of English produce into Germany. I shall send him to-day an extract from your letter, which will complete his alarm.

To Mr. Croker.

July 27, 1842.

The difficulty will be to prove that we have gone far enough in relaxation of prohibitions and protections.

Something effectual must be done to revive the languishing commerce and manufacturing industry of this country.

Look at the congregation of manufacturing masses, the amount of our debt, the rapid increase of poor rates within the last four years, which will soon, by means of rates in aid, extend from the ruined manufacturing districts to the rural ones, and then judge whether we can with safety retrograde in manufactures.

If you had to constitute new societies, you might on moral and social grounds prefer cornfields to cotton factories, an agricultural to a manufacturing population. But our lot is cast, and we cannot recede.

The Tariff does not go half far enough. If we could afford it, we ought to take off the duty on cotton wool, and the duty on foreign sheep's wool.

I repeat that the man who pays 2*l.* 18*s.* per cent. on his income may make that saving in his expenditure in consequence of the tariff. I am confident of it. And yet in the same breath I say to the agriculturists, 'Your apprehensions about fat pigs and fat cattle from Hamburg are absurd. There will be no reduction in the price of meat or cattle which need terrify you.'

Where is the inconsistency of this? I never said to the consumer, 'You will save three per cent. by the reduction of the price of meat.' I said, and said most truly, 'By the reduction in the price of timber, of coffee, of fish, of oil, of all articles of furniture, of corn—of everything, in short, which you consume, there will be a saving of three per cent. There may be a saving in the price of fresh meat—I sincerely hope there may; there will be a guarantee that meat shall not be at an extravagant price of tenpence in the pound.'

I have made no abatement in the Tariff or in the Corn Law in deference to repealers of the Corn Laws. There is nothing I have proposed which is not in conformity with my own convictions. I should rather say I have not gone in any one case beyond my own convictions on the side of relaxation.

Aug. 3.—The new Corn Law has, so far as we have had experience, worked well.

There has been a weekly import of foreign corn since it passed. The trade, foreign and retail, has been steady and regular. The duty will not fall below 8*s.*, and very probably we shall receive 600,000*l.* of revenue during this quarter from corn.

The Anti-Corn-Law League determined to make one desperate effort at the close of the Session to bully us into further alteration of the law. Hence the deputations and interviews, the system of lecturing, the gross exaggerations, the detail of individual cases of suffering, exhuming buried cows, &c.

We must make this country a cheap country for living, and thus induce parties to remain and settle here—enable them to consume more, by having more to spend.

It is a fallacy to urge that the loss falls on the agriculturists. They too are consumers. They lose almost as much in increased poor rates alone, as they gain by increased price.

Lower the price of wheat; not only poor rates, but the cost of everything else is lowered.

We do not push this argument to its logical consequences—namely, that wheat should be at 35*s.* instead of 50*s.* or 54*s.* We take into account vested interests, engaged capital, the importance of independent supply, the social benefits of flourishing agriculture. We find the general welfare will be best promoted by a fair adjustment, by allowing the legitimate logical deductions to be controlled by the thousand considerations which enter into moral and political questions, and which, as friction and the weight of the atmosphere, put a limit to the practical application of abstract reasoning.

Oct. 30.—The danger is not low price from the tariff, but low price from inability to consume, from the poor man giving up his pint of beer, and the man in middling station giving up his joint of meat.

Rest assured of this, that landed property would not be

safe during this next winter with the prices of the last four years, and even if it were safe it would not be profitable very long. Poor rate, rates in aid, diminished consumption, would soon reduce the temporary gain of a nominal high price.

The long depression of trade, the diminished consumption of articles of first necessity, the state of the manufacturing population, the instant supply by means of machinery of any occasional increased demand for manufactured goods, the tendency of reduced prices to sharpen the wits of the master manufacturer, and to urge him on in the improvement of his machinery; the double effect on manual labour and the wages of manual labour, first of this reduction in price, and secondly of the attempt to countervail it by improvement in machinery; the addition that each day makes of two thousand to the unemployed hands of the day before—these are the things about which I am more anxious than about the cattle from Vigo, or the price of pork.

To Lord Sandon.

Nov. 22, 1842.

I cannot say that I see cause to regret the fall of price in agricultural produce. I am sure the prices of the four years preceding the present could not have been safely maintained.

To Sir Thomas Fremantle.

Nov. 25, 1842.

This is the first intimation I have had that the thanksgiving for a good harvest was deemed 'inappropriate.'

The wheat crop of Sir Charles Burrell and that of three or four of his neighbours, who attend the parish church, failed—probably from want of draining and bad farming; and therefore we are not to thank God for a harvest which—considering the appearances and prophecies in May and June—was providentially good.

If Sir Charles had such cases before him as I have, of thousands and tens of thousands in want of food and

employment, at Greenock, Paisley, Edinburgh, and a dozen large towns in the manufacturing districts, he would not expect me to rend my garments in despair if 'some excellent jerked beef from South America' should get into the English market, and bring down meat from $7\frac{1}{2}d.$ or $8d.$ a pound.

To Mr. Arbuthnot.

Oct. 30, 1842.

I can readily believe that 'many of our Ultra friends are dissatisfied with the measures of last Session.'

I would most earnestly advise them to look beyond the present, and seriously to ponder upon some other matters that may not seem so immediately pressing, but are in truth more important to them and to their property than the fall in the price of stock, or of pigs, or of wheat.

The last letter I read before I opened yours was from Paisley, from the public authorities in that town responsible for its peace and good order. It states that now for upwards of a year eight or nine thousand persons on the average have been supported each week in that one town not by work—for there is no demand for labour—but by voluntary charity. It has required 600*l.* a week, besides poor rate, to keep these people from starving. Sometimes there have been 17,000 persons, in one town alone, dependent upon food not gained by the labour of their hands. I, who have no sort of connection with Paisley, have subscribed twice, being satisfied that if nothing were done we might take the choice either of hundreds dying of hunger, or of a frightful outbreak, and attack upon property.

The first question we shall have to consider in the Cabinet is, What is to be done with these people at Paisley during next winter? They are not fit for emigration. There have been about 150 bankruptcies among the principal manufacturers of the town. No rents are paid. No money can be raised, either by poor rate or voluntary contribution, within the district. This case of Paisley is perhaps the worst, but there are many other towns in a

condition not very different. What is to be the end of this?

Our Ultra friends may depend upon it that this state of things—the inability to consume—has more to do with low prices than the tariff has, and they may depend upon this also, that it would not have been safe to keep wheat at 64s. a quarter, and meat at 8d. a pound. My firm belief is that you could not have during the coming winter the high prices of the last four years, and at the same time tranquillity, and security for property.

Of this I am confident, that the condition of this country is a very alarming one; that without the income tax you would be insolvent; that the state of the revenue is very disheartening; and that the true ground for alarm to Ultra and to all other agriculturists is not the reduction of price from a good season, or even from the tariff, but increase of the poor rate, outbreaks from distress, and, above all, the inability to buy agricultural produce on account of poverty and distress.

The true friend to the 'astounded' and complaining Ultra is the man who would avert the consequences which would inevitably follow if some of them could have their way.

Other communications relate to Education, Mining, and Factory Reform.

To Sir James Graham.

(Most private.)

Jan. 18, 1842.

I return Brougham's letter and plans of Education. I fear there would be very great difficulties in the way of the adoption of either one or the other plan.

My own belief is that a more rapid advance in promoting good education will be made by the cautious and gradual extension of the power and the pecuniary means of the Committee of the Privy Council, than by the announcement at present of any plan by the Government.

There would be great jealousy of the taxing powers of

corporate authorities, almost universal. Here the Dissenters would object, there the Church, just as one party or the other might happen to prevail in the corporation.

To Lord Ashley.

June 16, 1842.

I am very much obliged to you for sending me a corrected copy of your speech on the Mining abominations. I read as much of the evidence as possible amid the incessant demands upon my time. I admire equally the good feeling and the ability, the qualities of head and heart, with which you have forced this matter upon public notice.

July 22.—I am always obliged by the unreserved communication of your opinions and feelings, even when you are compelled, by that sense of duty which always influences your conduct, to speak with dissatisfaction of the conduct of the Government.

I have been compelled to neglect many things which nothing but absolute necessity would have induced me to neglect. Some of the measures mentioned in the Queen's Speech have been postponed ; but when there is a constant unvarying demand upon sixteen or seventeen hours of the twenty-four for months together, delays which under other circumstances would be unjustifiable become unavoidable.

From Lord Ashley.

July 23, 1842.

Any excuse that *you* offer, drawn from long and arduous engagements, is altogether unanswerable.

In August it was arranged that the Duke of Wellington should become Commander-in-Chief, remaining in the Cabinet. In his own judgment it would have been better to dissociate him from party, but, as always, he was 'willing to take any course that her Majesty might command.'

To Mr. Arbuthnot.

April 5, 1842.

Lord Hill is very infirm, and I believe some of his relations do not consider it for his credit that he should remain where he is. I should have no difficulty in making the arrangement, in the event of his retirement, which could alone give satisfaction.

The Duke of Wellington is perfectly well. He has recently written a letter to Ellenborough, about the general defence of the Indian Empire, which for comprehensiveness of views, simplicity and clearness of expression, and profound sagacity, is equal to any production of the meridian of his glorious career. I could not help taking it to the Queen, and asking her to read it, that she might see what a resource she had in any difficulty.

From Mr. Arbuthnot.

April 9, 10, 1842.

I am rejoiced to observe that you say you should have no difficulty in making the proper arrangement. I had feared that there might be a great wish to appoint Prince Albert; which in these times of difficulty would have given no satisfaction.

I know that the Duke of Wellington would like to be Commander-in-Chief, and that he feels (talking openly to me) that no other person is fit for that important situation. But I told you confidentially that he supposed it was not compatible with the Cabinet; and his idea was, that out of the Cabinet he could be as much consulted by you, and as useful as he can be at present. You thought differently; and so do I. You must be prepared for his saying that in the year 1828 he was forced to resign the Command; but to this you will have an easy answer, by showing the difference between his being Prime Minister, as he was then, and his situation now, when he has only a seat in the Cabinet, without holding any department at all.

The Duke wrote to me that he had been occupied in

preparing for Lord Ellenborough a plan of operations for the conduct of the war, and for the defence of the Empire. I cannot tell you how it enchants me to have your opinion upon it; and that it has been made known to the Queen. He is, as you say, a true resource to us in all our difficulties; and we ought to be thankful to God for preserving him to us in all his pristine intellect.

July 29.—I have just had some talk with the Duke. He told me that, if he is to be at the Horse Guards, it would be necessary for him to leave the Cabinet. I said that this would distress you greatly, as you felt that having his name was of the utmost consequence to the Government.

He said, ‘Very well then, but I must at all events give up the lead in the House of Lords.’

He has often told me that, as he had no one to answer questions for the several departments, the business wore him to death.

To the Duke of Wellington.

Foreign Office : Aug. 10, 1842.

Immediately after you left the Cabinet, I intimated to our colleagues that I had advised the Queen to authorise me to propose to you to resume the Command of the Army.

They received this intimation with the greatest satisfaction, and have desired me to express their decided and unanimous wish that you should remain a member of the Cabinet, and continue to conduct the business of the Government in the House of Lords.

Whatever may be their satisfaction in seeing you at the head of the army, that satisfaction would be destroyed if your acceptance of the command were to sever a connection in political life which each of your colleagues regards with the utmost pride, and would never consent voluntarily to relinquish. I could not contemplate it without the utmost pain.

From the Duke of Wellington.

Aug. 10, 1842, at night.

I am most gratified by the desire of my colleagues in the Queen's service that I should be the Commander-in-Chief of the Army.

Ever since I resigned that office in the year 1828, I have been anxious to avoid to interfere with any military affairs whatever, most particularly in patronage; I have never done so excepting when my advice or assistance has been required by the Sovereign, by the Ministers of the Sovereign, or by the General Commanding the Army in Chief.

My wish that no ground should be afforded even for suspicion has induced me to desire to discontinue in future my attendance upon the business of the Queen's Government in the House of Lords, and upon the Cabinet Councils.

I think that it would be advantageous to relieve me from attendance at the meeting of the Cabinet Council. I have the misfortune of hearing only by one ear, and it must be obvious that I cannot hear all that passes. My attendance therefore is frequently only the loss of so much time.

However, I have always professed to be and I am ready to take any course that may be thought desirable for her Majesty's service, and, having stated clearly my own opinion and wishes, I declare myself willing to take any course which her Majesty may command.

In August, Sir Robert Peel started for the North, but not this time to shoot grouse. The Queen had made known to him her pleasure and that of the Prince, that they should pay a short private visit to Scotland, and had called for his advice. Knowing the Highlands, Sir Robert was well able to submit a route for approval, and threw himself with zeal into planning all the best arrangements.

When her Majesty's intentions became known, anxiety was expressed in some quarters lest her holiday should be disturbed, or even prevented, by the angry tempers then prevailing in

manufacturing and mining districts, through some of which it was proposed to pass. Two attempts having been made on the Queen's life within the last three months, this was not a danger to be disregarded.

But after full inquiry the Home Secretary and the Prime Minister were of opinion that the apprehensions were exaggerated, and that with due precautions the journey might be undertaken—an opinion justified by the result, for everywhere her Majesty was greeted with enthusiasm, such as would have made it difficult to do her harm.

The chief incidents of the visit are well known from her Majesty's own interesting Journal, but it seems worth while to record the impressions made on one so largely responsible as was Sir Robert Peel for the routes taken and the risk incurred; especially as the letters throw light on the disturbed state of the country at the time.

From the Queen.

Windsor Castle: Aug. 1, 1842.

If Sir Robert Peel still sees no objection, the Prince and Queen are very anxious to make this little trip to Scotland.

Sir Robert Peel knows that the Prince and Queen are very desirous, indeed they must have it understood beforehand, that the visit is strictly private; that there are to be no festivities or ceremonies.

Our intention is to go by sea to Edinburgh, or straight to Dalkeith, to stay five nights there, then to set off for Dunrobin, to stay there three nights, and then return, so that the whole could be done in three weeks at longest. We do not wish to be longer away from home this year.

Aug. 15.—The Queen is sorry to see that the troops were not very well received on their departure from London, and that some Chartists had been haranguing the mob seditiously. The example made at Preston she trusts, however, will have checked the rioters somewhat in their proceedings.

The Queen still cannot but fear that the journey may be prevented, as there seems to be disturbance at Dunfermline.

To the Queen.

Aug. 18, 1842.

Sir Robert Peel has this morning gone through all the letters received from the country, with Sir James Graham. It appears that the general tenor of the reports is satisfactory. From Manchester, from Wigan, from Preston, the accounts are very good.

The movement is not one caused by distress. The demand for labour has increased, and the price of provisions has rapidly fallen, within the last three weeks.

People of property, and the magistrates, are now acting in harmony, and with energy.

When peace and confidence are restored at Manchester, the example will quickly tell in the circumjacent districts.

Birmingham is tranquil and well disposed. The accounts from Scotland are favourable.

It appears to Sir Robert Peel that there is nothing to prevent perseverance in your Majesty's intentions with respect to Scotland; although he entirely concurs with your Majesty in opinion that a decided preference should be given to the return by sea.

To the Duke of Wellington.

Aug. 4, 1842.

The Queen will go to Edinburgh, but I prevailed on her Majesty to give up so distant an excursion as that to Dunrobin. I advised her to substitute visits to the most picturesque parts of the Highlands within reach. She willingly acquiesced in this.

She expressed a hope that I would meet her in Scotland, and remain there during her stay.

The Duke replies: 'I am delighted that you are going with Her.'

To Sir James Graham.

(Secret.)

Drayton Manor: Aug. 16, 1842.

While this ferment continues, I think it would be as well that the Queen should be upon her guard. I am

afraid she is a good deal exposed at Windsor, so far as the act of a single assassin is concerned.

A railway guard from London brought a report that the Queen had been assassinated at Windsor. I did not believe this, and the next train proved the report was without foundation.

To the Duke of Wellington.

Aug. 24, 1842.

I hope we have now seen the worst of the disorders in the manufacturing districts. There must have been a very extensive system of organisation, and great precaution and vigilance will still be requisite.

The conduct of the Yeomanry Cavalry in every district has been admirable, and we must consider of an extension of this force.

The police in London behaved with the greatest propriety and courage. Their manner of clearing the ground, and dispersing a mob of ten times their numerical force, was admirable. I have been in constant personal communication with the Queen during the late events. Her whole conduct was excellent. She was very desirous that decisive measures should be adopted, and very indignant with the lukewarmness and timidity of certain magistrates.

From Sir James Graham.

Aug. 25, 1842.

We have had a quiet night in London, and the suppression of tumults here has had a magical effect in calming Merthyr Tydvil, and in allaying the excitement in distant quarters, which waited for a signal from the metropolis.

I send you a letter of a most atrocious character; the passage relating to the Queen's visit to Scotland proves the necessity of caution there.

I enclose also letters from Stockport. These letters made so strong an impression on my mind lest we might incur the censure of playing the game of the Anti-Corn-Law League—by reducing wages and increasing profits at the

expense of the working man, the master being protected by military force—that I wrote letters to Lord Talbot and to Sir Thomas Arbuthnot, of which I enclose copies. I hope you will approve the line which I have marked out on this delicate ground.

Aug. 26.—The accounts from all quarters are good, and, by private letters which I see, the leading Chartists despair of any immediate success from open violence.

The Queen spoke to me last night on the subject of her excursion with evident pleasure and gaiety. She said that the recent tumults had been ‘very bad—like those of 1839.’ I said, ‘More serious.’ ‘Yes,’ she said, ‘Lord Melbourne remarked they more resembled those of 1830 and 1831.’

Enclosed is a letter from Dr. Kay Shuttleworth. Every man has his nostrum. The Clerk of the Council for Education thinks that moral training and normal schools will restore peace. These instruments are not to be despised, and have been too long neglected; but cheap bread, plenty of potatoes, low-priced American bacon, a little more Dutch cheese and butter, will have a more pacifying effect than all the mental culture which any Government can supply.

I think that before you set out on your journey it would be prudent to write to the Queen a letter stating that some disposition to riot had shown itself at Dundee and in the manufacturing districts, which, though not of sufficient importance to render the postponement of the excursion necessary, may more or less interfere with details of the contemplated arrangements.

In a word, it is expedient not to shake the Queen’s decision to go, but to inform her beforehand to a certain extent of the excitement which prevails; so that, if her reception be not quite cordial, she may not say, ‘You were forewarned, but I was kept in ignorance.’

Excuse my presumption in thus dealing with a matter of prudence and address, with you, who are my master and my friend.

Whitehall: Aug. 30, 1842.

All is quiet here, and the reports from the country may be considered favourable. Work is generally resumed, except by the colliers, but the men are sullen and dissatisfied, and the insufficiency of wages is the reason given for the refusal to return to work.

I am very much gratified by the kind expressions of approbation which you have bestowed on my recent exertions. The circumstances have been difficult, and the anxiety has been great; but while my health is unbroken no effort shall be omitted by me to do my duty, and to assist you, as well as I am able, in the arduous task of governing the country.

To Sir James Graham.

Dalkeith: Aug. 30, 1842.

From what I hear of public feeling, it would have been most unwise to abandon the journey. I very much doubt whether the chief inconvenience in Edinburgh will not be from loyalty, and a natural desire to see the Sovereign.

Aug. 31.—Everything seems satisfactory. Radical Town Councillors bursting with loyalty, enormous crowds all in good humour.

Sept. 1.—The City authorities did not choose to take the precaution which the Duke of Buccleuch and I took, and the military authorities also, namely, to station ourselves at Granton between three and four in the morning, and thus ensure being present at the time of the Queen's landing.

They did not give the necessary notice for the assembling of the people, neglected to make the signals agreed upon, were not in the proper place to present to the Queen the keys of the City, and in short spoiled half the effect of the day.

Nothing, however, could have been better than the behaviour of the people. I really believe the best feeling

prevails here among ninety-nine persons out of every hundred.

The colliers out of work were assembled in the roads to-day, but they cheered the Duchess of Buccleuch, and seemed just as loyal as their neighbours.

Sept. 2.—I wish we could appoint a Commission to ascertain the real truth as to the state of the relations between the employers and employed in Collieries.

I think it would be found that there are practical grievances—possibly not to be redressed by law—of which the employed have just reason to complain. What law cannot effect, exposure might.

I strongly suspect the profits in many of these collieries would enable the receivers of them to deal much more liberally with their workmen than they do. I fear there are galling regulations—with respect to weight of coal got, and to deductions from wages, and to dealing with particular shops—which justify complaint.

Without appointing a Commission, could we get such a man as Horner, or one of the best of your Poor Law Commissioners, to make a tour through Staffordshire and Shropshire, and get at some part of the truth at least, without ostentatious inquiry?

Sept. 3.—We have just concluded, with great success, the very nervous operation of taking the Queen in a low open carriage from Dalkeith to Dalmeny; sixteen miles, through the Canongate and High Street, and back by Leith in the evening.

Countless thousands of persons; the police arrangements in Edinburgh very defective; a mob allowed to run all the way alongside the carriage, composed of some fifty or sixty Chartists, and low blackguards.

However, they could do nothing, and particularly in Leith, against the almost unanimous feeling of loyalty. The Queen has returned quite safe, and I believe without having heard a disagreeable word.

Sept. 4.—I went with Lord Aberdeen and Lord Liverpool to the parish kirk at Dalkeith to-day, hoping that the

presence of the Queen's Ministers might do something to repair the absence of the Queen.

Sept. 6. Scone Palace.—You will be glad to hear that we have arrived here safely.

We passed through the outskirts of Edinburgh by Heriot's Hospital, crossed the ferry about eleven. Black looks at Inverkeithing; Kinross behaved well. We had the population of Dunfermline at various points drawn up on the roadside. The Queen, and all who accompanied her, were in open carriages, Aberdeen and I forming part of her suite, for want of horses.

We lunched at Dupplin, and arrived at Perth near six o'clock. It is impossible to give you an idea of the multitudes that were assembled. The evening was beautiful; the preparations, triumphal arches, and so forth, very handsome; the police arrangements admirable; the assembled thousands in a state of the greatest excitement, but in the highest good humour.

Nothing of the nature of a procession (of course I do not think of the magnificence of equipages, or military display) will ever be seen more striking than that of the Queen through Perth. It far, far exceeded Edinburgh, or anything I ever saw in London.

From Sir James Graham.

Whitehall: Sept. 8, 1842.

I am delighted with your letter from Scone. The gratification which the splendid success of this Royal Progress must have given to you will compensate for much anxiety and careful forethought. Our Royal Mistress ought to be pleased with the kind attention which you have paid to her wishes, and with the prudence which has provided for her safety.

To Sir James Graham.

Drummond Castle: Sept. 11.

Our progress has continued highly satisfactory. The reception at Taymouth was splendid, the cost enormous.

The schoolmaster at Aberfeldy observed with gravity, 'It's a vary proper thing for Breadalbane to give his countenance to the Queen, but he's spending a muckle deal o' siller.'

The passage in boats up Loch Tay, fifteen miles, was a most fitting conclusion of the visit.

Crieff, though disappointed by an hour's delay, which drove us into the dark, behaved as well as any place.

I wrote to you from Taymouth on the very subject to which you refer, the necessity of deeply considering more comprehensive and permanent remedies for disaffection and turbulence than mere measures of forcible repression.

Sept. 14.—We all returned last night from the Highland excursion, and I was heartily glad when the Queen set her foot again in Dalkeith Palace.

The crowds in Stirling and Linlithgow were astounding, and the clamour and excitement quite sufficient to show that *private* tours in Scotland by the Sovereign are not very practicable. The loyalty in these places was very unruly: the pressure in the streets made me fear not one but a hundred accidents. There was no choice, as the weather was fine, but to leave open the low carriage in which the Queen sat, which placed her perfectly at the mercy of a very well-disposed but very boisterous mob.

She told me that she had great difficulty in preventing them from seizing her hand for the purpose of manifesting their loyalty.

Sept. 18.—I am heartily glad to hear of the Queen's safe arrival at Woolwich, and the successful termination of her Majesty's prosperous visit to Scotland.

During the whole recess the private correspondence between Home Secretary and Prime Minister affords some measure of the zeal of both for the public service, and shows how their thoughts were chiefly employed, not in watching party interests, but in framing measures for the welfare of the people.

From Sir James Graham.

Whitehall: Sept. 1, 1842.

The accounts from Lancashire do not quite please me. The effect of the defence of the mill attended by bloodshed may not be injurious; but burglaries and violence on the highway are becoming more frequent; and a master manufacturer has been nearly murdered in open day, his skull being fractured in the presence of a multitude with circumstances of brutal cruelty. Every effort must be made to bring to justice the parties guilty of these recent outrages.

I enclose a letter from a working man at Philadelphia to his relations at Clitheroe, as it is worth your reading. It would seem that, in every country where manufacturing machinery has been largely introduced, the power of production has outstripped the means of consumption, and that grievous distress among the working classes is the unhappy consequence.

Legislation can do little in these cases. Care only must be taken that articles of prime necessity in such circumstances are not artificially enhanced in price.

I have seen Croker's article. I think it sound and judicious, and it has the merit of unfolding the real motives on which your policy is founded, and has therefore the force and strength of truth.

The Chartist delegates are active, and though disheartened are not subdued. We also must be vigilant, and the winter must not overtake us unprepared.

Sept. 8.—I enclose a memorandum drawn by Hardinge in concert with me, which contains the outline of a plan for the employment of the Pensioners in case of need. I hope that it will meet with your approbation. It combines efficiency, safety, and cheapness, in a pre-eminent degree. Full effect cannot be given to it without the consent of Parliament, but if you approve I will submit it to the Duke, and having obtained your joint sanction I would advise that it should be brought into immediate partial operation,

in Scotland, and in the four large English towns specified by Hardinge.

The ability with which Hardinge has matured the arrangement, and the admirable combination of various objects, all conducing to the public good, appear to me to merit the highest praise. I am quite sure that we can work this plan so as to make it an irresistible instrument for the prompt suppression of an insurrectionary movement.

At the same time we must not neglect any appliance which can improve the moral feeling and disposition of the people. We must augment the means of Education; we must keep down the price of articles of first necessity; we must endeavour to redress the wrongs of the labourer; we must mark an honest sympathy with his wants; and while we uphold the authority of law with firmness, we must temper it with mercy. All this is in the exact spirit of your Government, and, with the Divine blessing, I pray and hope that it may succeed.

To Sir James Graham.

Sept. 9, 1842.

It is very probable that further local inquiries may be requisite as the foundation of any scheme for the extension of Church accommodation.

What is the amount of the information collected by the Ecclesiastical Commission on that head? Could we have the information separately printed for our use? We ought to have estimates made of the means available for increased religious instruction of the people.

Pray consider the expediency of appointing an unpaid Commission to inquire into the state of some of the manufacturing districts, in which there is the greatest demand for the immediate application of a remedy.

Sept. 18.—I have read Hardinge's clear and able Memorandum. I have no doubt whatever of the efficiency of the plan, and of its superiority over every other method of employing the Pensioners.

From Sir James Graham.

Sept. 17, 1842.

I own to you that I am afraid of an inquiry by a new Commission into the want of moral and religious instruction in the manufacturing districts which have recently been disturbed.

I have no doubt that a frightful case of brutal ignorance and heathenish irreligion might be clearly established; and I am convinced that it is the paramount duty of the Government to apply a progressive remedy to an evil of such magnitude and danger. But, if you issue a Commission, you will excite to the utmost the hopes and fears of rival factions; the truth will be exposed in a light probably somewhat exaggerated, and the Government, which exposes to view so great a national deformity, ought to be prepared with an adequate remedy. A Commission is most useful to pave the way for a measure, which is preconcerted; take for example, the Poor Law Inquiry; it is often most embarrassing where it discloses the full extent of evils for which no remedy can be provided, as for example, the inquiry into the condition of the handloom weavers. I might add Lord Ashley's investigations into the sufferings of children employed in factories and mines.

When we have proved the want of education, the need of pastoral care, the insufficiency of church room, what hope is there that we can agree in Parliament on a scheme of national instruction, or obtain funds for the building and endowment of new churches, on a scale commensurate with the necessity which we shall have established?

The religious differences which divide in so remarkable a manner the three portions of the United Kingdom preclude the hope that any large drain on the public revenue for the purpose of extending the exclusive doctrine and discipline of the Church of England would be permitted, or permanently maintained. By judicious measures we may gradually propagate the saving knowledge of Christian truth; we may diffuse the blessing of a Scriptural educa-

tion ; we may render the property of the Church more and more available for the sacred use of the Church, and less subservient to the temporal interests of its ministers ; but all this must be done gently, almost silently, and from time to time public aid may be obtained. But if we appoint a Commission of Inquiry, if reports of striking effect be produced, if relying on these reports we attempt any large measure, general alarm will be excited, a spirit of resistance will be generated, failure will ensue, and the good which might otherwise be effected will be rendered impossible.

Let me beg of you to consider this view of the subject, before we decide on an inquiry.

The next letter relates to a proposal to relieve country gentlemen in England, as in Ireland, from some of their duties, by the appointment of Stipendiary Chairmen.

Oct. 9.—If we could go the length of Assistant Barristers in England as the paid Chairmen of Quarter Sessions, I see my way very clearly to many great and salutary improvements in our civil and criminal law.

I am afraid that the country gentlemen would rebel, but the question is worthy of our serious consideration.

Nov. 22.—The coal-owners are insane if they drive their men to a second strike in the dead of winter, and they must suffer the consequences. But it will be a serious public calamity, attended with danger.

I have entreated Lord Talbot to exert his influence, and to lead the masters to a more prudent course. If the strike be suspended, I will issue the Commission of Inquiry ; but if the strike takes place it will not be safe.

Dec. 21.—With respect to schools in the manufacturing districts, I have framed some clauses for insertion in a Factory Bill. They have been prepared under my direction by Mr. Horner, who has influence with the Dissenters, and by Mr. Saunders, who has the confidence of the Bishop of London ; and they are both Factory Inspectors.

If these clauses receive the sanction of the Archbishop

of Canterbury and of the Bishop of London, as I venture to hope, I shall bring them under your consideration, with the confident belief that we may carry them through Parliament; and that they will go far to secure the religious education of the rising generation employed in cotton, woollen, flax, and silk manufactories throughout England.

If we could attain this great object, and provide also for the improved education of the workhouse children, in the approaching Session, we shall not have laboured in vain.

To Sir James Graham.

Dec. 22.—It is impossible to propose any plan of Church Extension which shall not be open to objections of considerable force; but we must not too readily admit their conclusiveness.

Goulburn seemed to consider the prospective levy of a tax on clerical incomes, for the purpose of providing stipends for ministers, much less objectionable in principle, and less dangerous as a precedent, than for the purpose of building.

Suppose we concede this. We must then apply that fund to endowment only, and consider in what mode we can provide for the construction and future repair of the sacred edifice.

If endowment were insured, voluntary contribution might, I think, in some districts be raised to a considerable extent for the building. It would be greatly stimulated by the promise of an advance from some public fund, in aid of such contribution.

I dread, for the sake of the Church and its best interests, stirring up that storm, which large demands on the public purse would inevitably excite. Ireland, Scotland, Dissent, and religious indifference, might be brought by skilful management to combine against a vote for Church Extension in England.

I recommend, therefore, that we should exhaust in our

consideration every plan by which we can unite voluntary contribution and contribution from the revenues of the Church before we make a demand on the public purse. We cannot go further, I think, in that direction than loan without interest. Can we go so far?

I would rather accommodate our proposal to our legitimate means than incur the risk of such a contest as religious rancour and poverty might raise.

It is very well for clergymen, and for Sir Robert Inglis, to argue that it is the duty of the State to provide religious edifices wherever they are wanted, and that Dissenters are bound to build and repair and endow their own churches and those of the Establishment also, and this by new taxation wherever requisite. But you and I know that the Church and religion would suffer, and peace and charity would be sacrificed, were we in practice to push these arguments to their just logical conclusions.

Dec. 26.—Have you, or has the Lord Advocate, any plan for Scotch Legal Reform?

I strongly suspect there is an ample field for the sickle of judicious reform in the Scotch Law Courts.

So far, the letters deal with work in hand. One follows, with somewhat startling effect, looking a little further on, to total repeal of the Corn Laws; but not till after 'two or three years.' Next Session was 'too soon.'

From Sir James Graham.

Dec. 30, 1842.

It is a question of *time*. The next change in the Corn Laws must be to an open trade; and if our population increase for two or three years at the rate of 300,000 per annum, you may throw open the ports, and British agriculture will not suffer. But the next change must be the last; it is not prudent to hurry it; next Session is too soon; and as you cannot make a decisive alteration, it is far wiser to make none.

CHAPTER XIX.

1843.

Assassination of Peel's Private Secretary—Speech on Manufacturing Distress—Cobden denounces Peel—Peel's Answer—Cobden's Wrath—Factory Education—Nonconformist Opposition—Ashley on United Education—Church Extension—Custom-house Frauds—City Election—Military Expenditure.

EARLY in 1843 the reality of the danger, by some so lightly esteemed, to which persons in high station were exposed, by murderous attacks of wretches more or less insane—a peril which in the previous year the Queen had twice narrowly escaped—was forced on public notice by the assassination of Sir Robert Peel's private secretary, Mr. Edward Drummond, at Charing Cross. The bullet that mortally wounded him was presumably intended for his chief.

Sir Robert Peel himself, just afterwards, returning from a walk with his son Frederick, was stopped in Cockspur Street, to ask if he had heard about Mr. Drummond, and went straight to the house where he lived, and to which he had been taken.¹

Letters poured in from every side in which horror and commiseration mingle with congratulations on the Minister's own safety.

Foremost in sympathy, unwearied in her inquiries for the sufferer, and most solicitous for the prevention of such murders, was the Queen. By her Majesty's gracious permission some extracts from her letters are given as a record of feelings largely called forth at the time.

From the Queen.

Windsor Castle: Jan. 21, 1843.

The Queen sends her messenger up early in order that she may know the latest accounts of poor Mr. Drummond's state.

¹ Communicated by Sir Frederick Peel.

The Queen would also be thankful for any further details Sir Robert Peel may be able to furnish her with on this atrocious event.

Later.—The Queen has this moment received Sir Robert Peel's letter, and he may rely on our not mentioning to any one the circumstance he has communicated.

Most fortunate indeed is it that this wretch did *not* know Sir Robert, and we both must congratulate Sir Robert on so providential an escape; though the Queen doubts not that it will be additionally painful for him to feel that poor Mr. Drummond has suffered for his sake.

The Queen sincerely trusts that all danger is over, though with any wound fever and suffering are likely to come on for some days.

Jan. 24.—We are both much distressed at the sad accounts of poor Mr. Drummond, and though the worst may be feared, the Queen will not give up all hope. The suspense is dreadful for the poor family.

Jan. 25.—The Queen cannot refrain from writing to Sir Robert Peel to express to him how very much concerned the Prince and she are at the hopeless account Colonel Drummond has sent us of his poor brother this morning. She fears all will be over before this.

It is too shocking, and the Queen thinks has created a strong feeling in the public, as poor Mr. Drummond is deservedly so much liked and esteemed by everybody.²

The proofs of the wretch MacNaughten's madness in that letter seem to the Queen very slight, and indeed there is and should be a difference between that madness which is such that a man knows not what he does, and madness which does not prevent a man from purposely buying pistols, and then with determined purpose watching and shooting a person.

The Queen hopes that Sir Robert Peel will be cautious, and not expose himself, after this fearful warning.

² Mr. Drummond was very well known in society, having been Private Secretary to Canning, to

Ripon, and to Wellington, as well as to Peel.

On the same day, Sir Robert Peel, writing to announce the death of Mr. Drummond, adds that 'the sad event has had such an effect upon Lady Peel, and all the circumstances attending it are so distressing,' that he ventures to express a hope that her Majesty will have the goodness to permit him and Lady Peel to remain for the present in London.

The King of the Belgians writes to the Queen : 'It seems that it was really meant for Peel ! That would have been for you and for the country a dreadful calamity. He is a great statesman, and much devoted to you.'

From Lord Ashley.

Jan. 30, 1843.

Perhaps you will not think a few words of condolence and sympathy with the great loss you have sustained in poor Edward Drummond out of place.

He was to you so true a friend, and so valuable an assistant, that I may venture to regard him as among those whom you most loved and honoured. God knows the loss is not yours only ; everyone who enjoyed the acquaintance of the poor dear fellow must feel that society can ill afford the privation of so simple-hearted and so English a gentleman.

But his melancholy end fills me with horror ; I can hardly believe it a disconnected act ; it is 'the beginning of sorrows ;' an all-wise and all-merciful, though unsearchable Providence has permitted him to die by the blow that was intended no doubt for another.

Sursum corda ; these events must more and more convince us that human precautions are of slight avail—the everlasting arms are our only safety—and that as we hope to die, so we must daily learn to live, in His faith and fear.

To Lord Ashley.

Jan. 31, 1843.

If anything could administer consolation for the dreadful loss I have sustained under circumstances of the most painful nature, it would be the letter which you have

written to me, full of the kindest assurances of sympathy, and inculcating, with all the authority of a lofty and virtuous spirit, solemn truths too often neglected. What human precaution can be availing? The assassin of my poor friend had no grievance that we ever heard of; he never preferred a complaint.

I must have passed within three yards of him half an hour before the murder was committed.

To Lord Brougham.

Feb. 7. 1843.

I entirely concur in every sentiment you express, in regard to the grievous danger of admitting, without the utmost caution, eccentricity, or even certain degrees of insanity, as a defence for atrocious crimes.

I could prove to you, in the most decisive manner, from what has occurred between the hour when poor Drummond fell and the present moment, that ill-considered exemption from capital punishment, in the case of professing lunatics, would subject many sane and innocent men to great peril. The moment that Drummond's death was known, every crackbrained man in London who had, or fancied he had, a public grievance, began to speculate on the fear of death, on the hope that those supposed to have the power of redressing the grievance would be immediately worked upon by the fate of my lamented friend.

Surely that fear which they impute to others must influence themselves. Among a host of such persons there are two officers of the navy, a captain and a lieutenant, whom it is possible that a weak judge and a foolish jury might consider insane, who have been doing their best to convert the death of Drummond by covert menaces into the means of effecting their own objects.

A few days later, speaking on a motion for a Committee on the depression of manufacturing interests, Sir Robert Peel examined that proposal. Acknowledging with feeling the severe privations of the workpeople, and their fortitude, he did not think a Committee would help them. 'Last year there had been

a liberal substitution of direct for indirect taxation. While the results of it were yet unknown, to appoint a Committee on financial remedies would suspend the proper functions of the Government, create uncertainty, and thereby paralyse reviving trade. The choice having been definitely made between two opposite policies, protection of native industry, and on the other hand abolition of prohibitive and relaxation of protective duties, he urged that the general principles last year adopted should be applied to existing interests with caution. What said Adam Smith? "Humanity," he wrote, "may require that the freedom of trade should be restored by slow gradations, and with reserve and circumspection. If high duties and prohibitions were taken away all at once, cheaper foreign goods might be poured so fast into the home market as to deprive many thousands of their ordinary employment." Such was the view of a great writer on free trade, and such was the right course for practical reformers. The Government had not been remiss in efforts to relieve distress. The late Ministers in 1840 had increased the duties on wool and cotton, and on all raw produce. The present Government last year had reduced the duty on almost every raw material, and had removed the prohibition on foreign meat. The price of corn was low. They had diminished expenditure by 850,000*l.*, had brought two wars to an end, had reduced the military force in Canada, had adjusted differences with the United States, and in France had done much to soothe hostile feeling. But if the House really believed that a Committee would do more to alleviate distress, let them vote for it, without regard to party.' The House rejected the proposal by a majority of 115.

On this occasion took place what has been called 'the most painful incident of Cobden's parliamentary life.'

Just before the Prime Minister rose, Mr. Cobden, addressing him more directly and with more vehemence than was usual in the House, had said :

' You took the Corn Laws into your own hands, after a fashion of your own, and amended them according to your own views. . . . You acted on your own judgment, and would follow no other, and *you* are responsible for the consequences of your act. . . . You passed the law. You refused to listen to the manufacturers, and I throw on *you* all the responsibility of your own measure.

‘I must tell the right honourable Baronet that it is the duty of every honest and independent member to hold *him individually* responsible for the present condition of the country. . . . I tell him that *the whole responsibility of the lamentable and dangerous state of the country rests with him*. He has the power to do as he pleases.’

It was not the first time that Cobden had held such language. At angry meetings he had asserted that the Prime Minister could, when he chose, repeal the Corn Laws, and had heaped on him the blame for the present sufferings and starvation. Till now Sir Robert Peel had remained silent; but challenged face to face he needs must answer. He did so quite briefly, but in a House excited by the personal attack, and perhaps by something in Peel’s manner that recalled to mind the recent fate of Drummond and the apprehensions felt as to the Minister’s own safety, his defiant bearing told with singular effect.

‘The hon. gentleman,’ he said, ‘has stated here very emphatically what he has more than once stated at the conferences of the Anti-Corn-Law League, that he holds me individually [great excitement]—me individually responsible for the distress and suffering of the country. . . .

‘Be the consequences of these insinuations what they may, never will I be influenced by menaces, either in this House or out of this House, to adopt a course which I consider——’

Here the speech was interrupted by cries from various quarters, and Mr. Cobden rose to explain. The House refused to hear him, and Sir Robert Peel resumed:

‘I do not want to overstate anything; . . . but the hon. gentleman did twice repeat that he held me individually responsible. The hon. gentleman may do so, and may induce others to do the same. I only notice his assertion for the purpose of saying that it shall not influence me in the discharge of public duty.’

After the speech, Mr. Cobden explained:

‘In what I stated, I intended—and I believe everybody but the right hon. Baronet understood what I meant [‘No, no’]—to throw the responsibility upon him as the head of the Government; and in using the word “individually,” I used it as he uses the first pronoun, when he says, “*I* passed the tariff, and you supported *me*.” I treat him as the Government; as he is in the habit of treating himself.’

Sir Robert Peel, in the best spirit of the House of Commons on such occasions, at once replied :

*'I am bound to accept the construction which the hon. Member puts upon the language he employed. He used the word "individually" in so marked a way, that I and others put upon it a different interpretation. He supposes the word "individually" to mean public responsibility in the situation I hold—and I admit it at once. I thought that the words he employed, "I hold you individually responsible," might have an effect which I think many other hon. gentlemen who heard them might anticipate.'*³

Thus, accepting Cobden's explanation, and in return accounting for his own impression, shared by others, of what might be the effect, however little intended, of singling out one Minister as the cause of great prevailing misery, Sir Robert Peel dismissed the subject from his mind, unconscious of the fierce resentment roused in his assailant.

Of Cobden's tone and temper his biographer has given a characteristic specimen.

'Peel is obliged now to assume that he was in earnest, for no man likes to confess himself a hypocrite, and to put up with the ridicule of his own party in private as a coward. Lord ——— was joking with Ricardo in the House the other night about him; pointing towards Peel as he was leaning forward, he whispered, "There, the fellow is afraid somebody is taking aim at him from the gallery."

*'He is looking twenty per cent. worse since I came into the House, and if I had only Bright with me, we could worry him out of office before the close of the Session.'*⁴

In contrast to this, Peel's private letters contain no notice of the incident till three years later, when his attention was recalled to it by Cobden's friends.

As to the charge of cowardice, Sir Robert Peel took proper steps to protect himself and his colleagues, but did not vary his habit of returning home nightly on foot.

³ Miss Martineau writes: 'It was some time before Sir Robert Peel was considered safe. Two policemen in plain clothes followed him. Drunken men were heard to threaten

the Queen and the Minister, and infirm brains began to work in that direction.' *History of the Peace*, ii. 527.

⁴ Letter to F. Cobden.

To the Queen.

March 3, 1843.

This day the Chancellor of the Exchequer will appear at one of the police offices] to exhibit a charge against a person who, since the assassination of Mr. Drummond, has repeatedly threatened Mr. Goulburn, and has been waiting about Downing Street and the House of Commons.

Sir Robert Peel has strongly urged Mr. Goulburn to appeal to the law for protection, in order that he may have some other security than the vigilance of a police officer, and in order also that the public may be made aware of the extent of the evil.

On March 27 Sir Robert Peel, in proof that there was little to apprehend from violence, informs her Majesty that he has *walked* home every night from the House of Commons, and notwithstanding frequent menaces and intimations of danger has not met with any obstruction.

Exposed at this time to taunts and sneers from both sides—from 'his own party' (if aggrieved Protectionists might still be called so), and from the League—Peel found relief in a clear conscience, and in the warm regard of friends.

From Lord Ashley.

April 2, 1843.

Pray put this book [unnamed] in your desk, within reach of your hand. Whenever you are wearied with toil, harassed by obstacles, disgusted with jobbers, oppressed by ingratitude (the lot of all Ministers), and dejected by forebodings, give three seconds to the reading of a single thought, and sure I am that you will derive from it strength and refreshment of spirit.

I have long been deeply and comfortably convinced that the life of a public man must be a life of torment, except through the daily contemplation that all these things must come to an end.

Lord Ashley was at the time helping Peel and Graham in a noble effort to educate neglected factory children. But the attempt to do so by a Bill was defeated by the jealousies of rival Christian Churches.

From Sir James Graham.

April 13, 1843.

I have received the enclosed communication from the Wesleyan Body with great regret. It is more hostile than I anticipated, and marks distinctly a wide estrangement from the Church. In some of the principles announced, this declaration goes the whole length of the bitterest dissent, and the sole reservation opposed to perfect equality of sects is against the Roman Catholics alone.

It is quite clear that the Pusey tendencies of the Established Church have operated powerfully on the Wesleyans, and are converting them rapidly into enemies.

I shall send the paper to the Bishop of London, that the Church may know and feel how their enemies are multiplied, and what are the causes of increasing hostility.

To Lord Ashley.

(*Private.*)

June 16, 1843.

Your kind and considerate letter in respect to the educational clauses in the Factory Bill, released the Government from the great embarrassment which they would have felt in abandoning those clauses, if, after the part you have taken on the subject of education and the religious and social welfare of the manufacturing classes, and considering your high authority on any question relating to the improvement of their condition, your opinion had been decidedly in favour of perseverance.

My own opinion is, seeing what has passed, that there would be no advantage to the cause of religious education in trusting to the co-operation of the Dissenting Body in our measure, and that to abandon it is preferable to failure after religious strife.

It is but a sorry and lamentable triumph that Dissent has achieved.

To the Queen.

June 16, 1843.

In consequence of the persevering and general opposition of the Dissenting Body to the proposed measure of the Government for providing combined scriptural education for the children employed in factories, and the little prospect that they would, even if the Bill were carried, unite in giving effect to it, your Majesty's servants thought it better to withdraw the measure than make an attempt to carry it, which, as success depended upon general concord and goodwill, must be ultimately unavailing, and the progress of which must infallibly embitter religious animosity and strife.

The opposition on this occasion of Nonconformists determined Lord Ashley to support in future denominational as more feasible than united education.

From Lord Ashley.

June 17, 1843.

You might have carried your Bill through the House by unwilling voters and small majorities, but you could not have carried it into practical operation.

We must ascribe much—very much—of this resistance to the fears of the people caused and stimulated by the perilous pranks of Dr. Pusey and his disciples. A vast body of Churchmen actuated by these alarms rejoiced in the opposition.

The clergy are not to be blamed for their backwardness. The Church has never made so great concessions: they went to the very verge of what a man of principle could vote for, but she made them in the hope of conciliation. We cannot be surprised that she should be reluctant to force a measure on the country which would not pacify their opponents, and was distasteful to themselves.

Let this last trial be taken as a sufficient proof that 'united education' is an impossibility. It ought never again to be attempted. The Dissenters and the Church

have each laid down their limits which they will not pass ; and there is no power that can either force, persuade, or delude them.

Your Government has nothing to regret, except the loss of a healing measure. You would have much to regret had you not propounded it. But you have endeavoured to remove a great evil, and in so doing have thrown the responsibility, before God and man, on the shoulders and consciences of others.

To Lord Ashley.

July 13, 1843.

In consequence of my recent communications with you on the subject of a subscription for the promotion of education in the manufacturing districts, and my general concurrence with you on that subject, I think it right to send you the copy of a private letter which I have written to the Archbishop of Canterbury.

From Lord Ashley.

July 17, 1843.

I am much obliged to you for permitting me to see a copy of your letter. As one of the Committee, I must thank you for your munificent donation [5,000*l.*], and express a hope that it may set the example to the great and wealthy of the land, nine-tenths of whom, though they surpass those of other countries, fall far short of their duties, as estimated by the mighty possessions that God has given them. The fact is, we are immersed in luxury, selfishness, and the worship of sense, and all the indications of a declining Empire.

The appeal will not be successful. We might have raised a large sum, but the National Society will make but slight concessions of any kind. It is governed by men who are wholly unequal to the exigencies of the times, ignorant of the public mind, and satisfied with themselves. Fear has some effect on them, but wisdom none.

Similarly, to Church Extension, Peel found it easier to give private than public aid.

On this important subject he had written early in the year.

To the Right Hon. Henry Hobhouse.

Jan. 21, 1843.

The question of Church Extension is occupying as much of my thoughts and attention as I can, amid the incessant demands upon them, devote to it.

The state of the population in the manufacturing districts is such, with reference to spiritual instruction and care, that it is impossible to defer the consideration of a remedy of social evils fraught with imminent danger. It would be criminal to postpone such consideration indefinitely.

Sir Robert Inglis thinks the whole difficulty would be readily solved by the proposal of a large parliamentary grant, two or three millions.

I totally differ from him. Such a grant simply proposed would meet with powerful and persevering opposition from large classes of the House of Commons; from the representatives of Ireland; in the present state of the Scotch Church, from the representatives of Scotland; from all the representatives of Dissent in its various forms; from combinations for party purposes; from, in short, all the elements of which a powerful opposition could be formed.

The question raised would be, not whether it is the duty of the State—all other means being exhausted—to provide additional church accommodation; but whether upon searching inquiry the property of the Church, if applied to *bona fide* spiritual purposes, would not be sufficient for the purpose required. That is the arena on which the battle would be fought. The adverse motion made would not be a direct negative, but a proposal for inquiry.

My belief is, that the inquiry would be carried, and of course, under the circumstances supposed, would be conducted in the most hostile spirit.

I should deprecate, for the sake of the Church and of the interests of religion, such an inquiry. The result would be, in my opinion, decisive proof of mismanagement, and of the competency of Church property, if duly administered for strictly religious and spiritual purposes, to bear increased charges.

I do not very much approve of the project of separate taxation of individual ministers of the Church. I do not consider that the State has entered into any engagement not to levy increased taxation upon the Church; but I should prefer, in principle, to acquire additional means for Church extension rather through the instrumentality of improved management than of taxation levied exclusively on one class of the Queen's subjects.

I will give you only the outlines of the measures which I believe would be best for the general welfare.

First.—The charge of maintaining the fabric should be borne either as at present by a levy on property, or by public funds assigned in lieu of that levy.

Secondly.—I would propose a grant of public money, probably an annual one, to be applied forthwith to the *endowment* of new churches in the districts most requiring them. I would trust much to voluntary contributions for the building of new churches.

Thirdly.—I would undertake maturely to consider the whole state of the remaining Church property with a view to the administration of it on trust principles for purely religious purposes. I would do for the Church, that is, for religion, what Mr. Pitt did for the Crown, when he improved the management of its land revenues. I would employ, as far as they safely could be employed, local and ecclesiastical agents in the superintendence of local property, and take every guarantee against the invasion of Church property by the State for secular purposes.

If, however, it were well administered, and applied *bona fide* to the extension of the just influence of the Church of England—if there were new endowments in populous districts, and the foundations of the Church were widened by such

endowments, there would be less danger of secular invasion in evil times than there is under the present system.

I feel the force of some objections to a plan of this kind. . . . It would affect in point of feeling, in point perhaps of public impression, the position of dignitaries of the Church. But I doubt whether the moral influence of a bishop relieved from the cares of a landed proprietor, from the uncertainties of income, from the lottery of fines and renewals and the temptation to speculate on contingent losses and gains, would be seriously or permanently diminished by the change.

And then comes the great question. Shall we, in order to avoid the consideration of these matters, leave untouched the much greater matters connected with Church Extension? Or shall we, touching those greater matters, content ourselves with proposing—in the present state of the Revenue—a large grant from the public funds, trusting that the question of Church property, and the means of making it more productive and available, will escape notice in Parliament?

Such a trust on our part would be in my opinion thoroughly delusive. If you are to consider Church Extension at all, the inquiry into Church property will infallibly come. Whether it come in a friendly shape or a hostile one will depend upon the nature of the proposal made by the Government.

Will you be good enough to read the accompanying memorandum drawn up by Gladstone? I was anxious to ascertain his views, and communicated confidentially with him on the subject.

Mr. Gladstone's Memorandum is not with the letters. Sir Robert Peel now wrote to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners:

Whitehall: Aug. 26, 1843.

As the Bill for making better provision for the spiritual care of populous parishes has passed into a law, I am desirous, in my capacity of a private member of society,

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of making a communication to you on the subject of this Act.

It provides means for the endowment of additional ministers from the property of the Church, but not for the erection of places of worship, or the other objects connected with pastoral superintendence.

When I introduced the Bill, I stated the reasons which induced her Majesty's Government to abstain from proposing any parliamentary grant for the purpose of Church Extension. I expressed at the same time a confident hope that if the means of endowment for additional ministers were provided, and especially if these means were provided at the instance and from the property of the Church, many persons would be disposed to promote by voluntary contributions the great object contemplated by this measure. I adverted especially to those persons who are now connected by the ties of property with manufacturing and thickly peopled districts, in which the evils of religious destitution chiefly exist, and to those who (though any immediate personal connection with such districts may have ceased) owe no small portion of their worldly prosperity to the successful industry of their forefathers, and to the employment of manufacturing labour.

Standing in each of these relations towards certain of the manufacturing districts, and being desirous of acknowledging the obligations which they impose, I wish to place at the disposal of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners the sum of four thousand pounds, to be applied in furtherance of the purposes of the Act, upon the following conditions.

That the sum in question shall be advanced in aid of the subscription of at least equal amounts, for the purpose of providing places of Divine worship, either churches or chapels or temporary buildings, to be licensed by the bishop of the diocese.

That it shall be applied to cases of religious destitution in the metropolitan district, and in the manufacturing and mining districts of the counties of Lancaster, Stafford, and Warwick.

That preference shall be given to cases in which religious destitution prevails to the greatest extent, and in which also there are the smallest available means for remedying the evil, either on account of the poverty of the district, or on account of the circumstance that the possessors of property are not members of the Church of England, and are unwilling to contribute to the maintenance and extension of its doctrines.

That it be not applied to the discharge of any existing debts on account of church building now in progress, but to the provision of new places of worship in separate districts and new parishes to be constituted under the Act, for the ministers of which endowment shall be provided by the Commissioners.

From Mr. Goulburn.

Aug. 29, 1843.

Murray has just told me of your munificent donation to the Ecclesiastical Commission. He thinks that the knowledge of it would operate as an example to others, and wished me to ascertain whether you had any objection to its publication.

I cannot but envy you the power of acting so liberally, but yet more the liberal disposition which prompted the donation, which, as it cannot be without fruit to yourself, will also, I trust, prove fruitful in the advancement of sound religious doctrines among the lower classes of the community.

To Mr. Goulburn.

Aug. 30, 1843.

I would rather Mr. Murray did not authorise any publication in the newspapers on the subject which he mentioned to you. The fact will, of course, be known to those whom it will in any way concern.

From the Archbishop of Canterbury.

Addington Park : Aug. 30, 1843.

When the proper time arrives, I think the publication of your letter will be of infinite service in many points of view, and especially in the way of example to persons who seem not to be aware of the claims of the populous manufacturing districts on their liberality.

I could not forbear the expression of my sense of the benefits likely to result from your splendid offering to the Church.

In the last days of the Session the reports to her Majesty exhibit the Prime Minister still contending with Radical obstruction.

On Aug. 15, 1843, Sir Robert Peel reports to the Queen that a vexatious opposition was raised to the Chelsea Pensioners Bill by a small minority led by (among others) Mr. Hume, Mr. Duncombe, Mr. Cobden, and Mr. Bright. 'Mr. Duncombe and Mr. Cobden appeared inclined to prevent if possible the progress of the Bill by motions of adjournment, and similar abuses of the forms of the House.'

Her Majesty in reply expressed her indignation at the very unjustifiable manner in which the minority were obstructing the order of business, and hoped that every attempt would be made 'to put an end to what is really indecent conduct,' and that Sir Robert Peel would 'make no kind of concession to these gentlemen, which could encourage them to go on in the same way.'

In reply, Aug. 17, Sir Robert Peel describes further abuse of rules of the House. 'Distinct declarations were made that the power of a minority should be used for the purpose of obstructing the Bill.'

'Mr. Bright, the new member for Durham, made one of those speeches which are frequent of late, insinuating disaffection among your Majesty's troops, and repeating perfectly unfounded and false reports about the conduct of the troops during the disturbances of the autumn. Such speeches serve one good purpose at least, that of creating disgust and an unwillingness on the part of members of respectability to act in concert with those who utter them.'

‘Your Majesty’s servants were determined not to give way upon any point. . . . They declined to consent to a compromise, and insisted on the Bill being permanent. They had taken measures to ensure the attendance of forty members prepared to sit up the whole night and resist the threatened motions for adjournment. At length the minority gave way.’

‘Sir Robert Peel trusts that the course pursued by the Government will operate as a check upon future attempts on the part of a small minority to obstruct public business.’

The letters of the recess again show Sir Robert Peel’s activity and vigilance in departmental business. For example, he writes to Mr. Goulburn :

Sept. 17, 1843.

I think we ought to institute a most searching inquiry into every allegation with respect to the misconduct of parties employed in the Custom House, without reference to persons or possible consequences.

I confess I distrust everything about the Customs, so far at least as to feel assured that a vast many have been dishonest, and none have been vigilant.

Sept. 24.—I think our course is clear—to inquire patiently and fully, without regard to consequences, taking every care that we can that no man shall suffer by false allegations.

Oct. 6.—I strongly advise that we should take into consideration the rules—if there be any—on which the Treasury acts in respect to the permissions occasionally granted for the importation of goods duty free by private parties—I mean ambassadors, members of the Royal Family, and so forth. Every such permission is—properly translated—a fraud upon the Revenue.

I thought that no other authority than the Treasury could relax the rule. But mention is made of permission given by the Commissioners of Customs to pass duty free **Madame Persiani’s [a dressmaker’s] baggage.**

Have they any power to do this? If they have, I am sure it ought instantly to be withdrawn.

Dec. 9.—Were you made acquainted with all the reasons which induced the Board of Customs to compromise with Candy [for repayment of 10,000*l.*] ? and did you sanction the proceedings ?

There is a temptation of immediate advantage to extort something out of the ill-gotten gains of a rogue. But I very much doubt whether, looking to ultimate and general effects, absolute failure from want of legal evidence, or from legal and technical difficulties, is not less to be deprecated than compromise. I hope the matter has been very seriously considered. A department may have dishonest reasons for compromise.

The Prime Minister had also a careful eye to parliamentary elections.

To the Duke of Wellington.

Oct. 10, 1843.

In consequence of the interference of the Anti-Corn-Law League, the City election becomes one of more than ordinary importance.

Mr. Baring has come forward most gallantly, and has declared his principles with great ability.

Baron Rothschild is an important man. He told Baron Kiemansegge that he had not committed himself, and that he could command a thousand votes. There are, I believe, not less than twelve thousand Jewish votes. All we can hope for is his neutrality.

The impression is that your influence with Mrs. Rothschild is more powerful than any other. Can you give her a word of advice ?

It will be a sad thing to see the house of Rothschild opposing the house of Baring, and adopting the candidate of the League.

From the Duke of Wellington.

Oct. 12, 1843.

It is most desirable that Mr. Baring should be supported.

I entertain no doubt that if I had an opportunity of

conversing with Mrs. Lionel Rothschild, or with her mother Mrs. Rothschild, my opinion and wishes might have some weight with them ; but I should have great difficulty in commencing the subject. I should feel still greater difficulty in writing upon it.

The Rothschilds are not without their political objects, particularly the old lady and Mr. Lionel. They have long been anxious for support to the petitions of the Jews for concessions of political privileges. I should doubtless hear of these objects.

Others being less active than the Prime Minister in canvassing, Mr. Baring was defeated, partly by the exertions of the Anti-Corn-Law League. This caused anxiety to the Conservative party, and to the Queen.

From Mr. Goulburn.

(Private.)

Oct. 23, 1843.

I came to town yesterday and found all our friends much discomfited by the result of the City election. From all that I can learn, it was lost more in consequence of the indifference and lukewarmness of friends than from the strength of our opponents.

From Lord Aberdeen.

Nov. 4, 1843.

I have had a very long conversation with the Queen ; she spoke of many domestic questions - Ireland, the Scotch Church, state of trade, and others ; but she rather surprised me by suddenly asking whether I thought the Government stronger or weaker than it had been.

I told her I had no doubt the Government was much less popular than it had been ; but that this had little to do with strength or weakness. The grumbling of disappointed persons, or the discontent of those out of doors, who were desirous of change, was of very little consequence, so long as a good majority remained firm in the House of Commons.

She followed this subject for some time with evident interest; and asked particularly about the effect of the London election. I told her I was a very bad judge of these matters, and knew very little about them, but that it certainly seemed to me the result was a serious blow against the Corn Laws, and a great triumph for the League.

As the autumn advanced, in preparing for the measures of the next Session, Sir Robert Peel was disappointed to find that instead of any reductions, due to a more pacific policy, there was a demand for an increase in military expenditure, owing to the uneasiness of the Commander-in-Chief as to the defences of the country and the state of Ireland.

To Sir James Graham.

Oct. 15, 1843.

I sincerely hope it will not be necessary to increase the Army. I am sure nothing short of absolute and demonstrable necessity would warrant it. What is to become of the finance of the country, if after all our recent victories and adjustments of troublesome questions we cannot equalise expenditure and revenue?

From Lord Stanley.

Dec. 16, 1843.

I enclose an official letter from the Horse Guards respecting the strength of the Army, which you will see that the Duke is desirous of increasing. Before I answer this, I should like to have your views on the subject.

I am very unwilling to assent to an augmentation of the Army, notwithstanding the state of Ireland. We have there nearly 7,000 and in Great Britain 900 more men than we had last year.

To Lord Stanley.

Drayton Manor: Dec. 19, 1843.

I shall deeply lament the necessity of proposing to Parliament in the next Session an augmentation of the Army.

Considering the termination of hostilities in Afghanistan, and on the coast of China ; the predictions of willing submission to our supremacy in Scinde ; the state of our relations with France, with the United States, and with every powerful continental nation ; the proposal to augment the Army will create great surprise, and make a very unfavourable impression.

These are subordinate considerations to the great interests of the public service, but I do hope these interests can be effectually provided for without further demands on the public revenue.

What is to become of this country in point of finance I know not. The income tax, raising five millions, gives us this year I hope a small surplus ; but the income tax is at an end, unless renewed in the spring of 1845.

Does not the present effective force of the Army exceed that for which we took credit during the last Session ? In addition to this there is the enrolment of pensioners under Hardinge's Act, providing for home service 10,000 men not contemplated last year. These matters should be well considered, before the Cabinet shall determine to propose an augmentation. The *prima facie* case against it, even with all allowance for the state of Ireland, and the state of the North-west frontier of India, appears to me very strong.

From Lord Stanley.

Knowsley : Dec. 23. 1843.

Perhaps the best course will be to defer answering the official inquiry which the Duke has put to me till I can have the opportunity of personal communication with him, and if necessary can bring the subject before the Cabinet.

I have no doubt that you will be obliged to renew the income tax early in 1845 ; especially if we are to experiment, as I hope we may be able to do, in the way of reduction of duties, and especially on sugar.

In the winter of this year Drayton Manor was honoured by a visit of the Queen and Prince. A single letter will show some-

thing of the spirit in which Sir Robert Peel received them—his view of what would be in good taste, and give most pleasure to his Royal guests, and to his humbler neighbours.

To Mr. William Peel.

November 22, 1843.

The best decoration for Fazely will be to have the children of the school drawn up. The children of Drayton, Tamworth, Fazely, and the other schools of Tamworth parish drawn up in line, all together, and a shilling given to each child to make merry, will be a good reminiscence.

I will give a shilling to each of mine, Drayton and my father's school, and contribute for others if it be requisite.

I think the poorest of the poor should have some rejoicing, something to eat and drink at a given time. I have told the Mayor I would give one hundred guineas for this purpose, the poor in and connected with the poor-house to be specially remembered, the rest to be applied to some sort of carousing for the poorest of the town, and of the hamlets.

CHAPTER XX.

INDIA, 1841-2.

Choosing a Governor-General—'Far the most fit Person'—British Disasters—Met with Roman Firmness—British Prisoners—Rescue, Ransom, or Abandonment—Orders to Retreat—Not Obeyed—Three Victories—Ellenborough's Triumphant Proclamation—The Gates of Somnauth—Wellington's Approval—Peel's Congratulations.

THREE times in his political life it became the duty of Sir Robert Peel to select a Governor-General for India. In 1835 he named Lord Heytesbury, but the Whigs set him aside as too friendly to Russia, and sent out Lord Auckland. In 1841 Peel chose Lord Ellenborough, in 1844 Sir Henry Hardinge. Under each of these two rulers our Indian Empire was in great peril. In each crisis it may be observed how calm and sane was the judgment of the Prime Minister, how vigorous a support he gave to a servant of the Crown contending with difficulties far from home.

Hardly had he assumed power in 1841, when Lord Auckland's time came to retire. Peel's choice of a successor fell on Lord Ellenborough, who had long represented India in the Cabinet. It was expected that he would restore Indian finance, be just in patronage, and rule with industry and zeal. His weak point would be 'a tendency to precipitation.' But this it was hoped might be restrained.

To the Duke of Wellington.

Whitehall: Oct. 6, 1841.

I have been turning in my mind the Government of India. I have not the least reason for supposing that Lord Ellenborough wishes for the appointment, or would like it, but it seems to me—considering his knowledge of Indian

affairs, his industry and general ability—he would be preferable to Lord Wharncliffe.

I should have great confidence in his integrity in the administration of patronage, and in his desire to curtail expense, and place the revenue of India on a satisfactory footing.

The only drawback would be a tendency to precipitation and over-activity, but I suppose he would have very good and steady advisers in India.

From the Duke of Wellington.

London: Oct. 7, 1841.

There is no doubt but Lord Ellenborough is better qualified than any man in England for the office of Governor-General, and I think it probable that he will accept it.

I don't think you can safely rely upon the members of his Council to check his active habits and disposition. The constitution of the Government is the will of the Governor-General declared in Council in the form of a resolution or order and signed by the Secretary of the Government. The Councillors may differ in opinion, may, and indeed ought, by minute in the proceedings, to record each his opinion; but they cannot obtain an alteration of the decision, without the consent of the Governor-General.

The members of the Council are gentlemen in the Civil Service of the East India Company.

I believe the law requires that they should have served twelve years before they can be appointed members of Council. But such men cannot be considered capable of contending with a man in the station of the Governor-General, with his experience in State affairs, particularly with one who, having for many years filled the office of President of the Board of Control, must have more knowledge even of local affairs than they can have acquired by their service in the country. They could scarcely venture to check his disposition to hasty decisions.

I think, however, you may rely upon Lord Ellenborough's sound sense and discretion, that he will avoid to involve himself and the public interests in difficulties, by well considering all the consequences which may follow any decision before he orders its execution.

From Lord Ellenborough.

Grosvenor Place : Oct. 9, 1841.

As I ought not to have any hesitation, so neither will I allow myself to have any, about accepting the proposition you most unexpectedly made to me yesterday.

I feel that, in the present position of India, I have no other duty to perform than that of setting aside all personal and private considerations, and devoting myself entirely to the execution of the high trust reposed in me.

Still it is for you again to consider whether my yet imperfect recovery of health may not create some danger, if I should go to India ; I will not say to my life, for that is of little worth, and I am ready to sacrifice it, but some danger of my not being able always to perform with the requisite efficiency the arduous duties.

To Lord Ellenborough.

(*Confidential.*)

Whitehall : Oct. 9, 1841.

The public grounds on which you waive all personal consideration, and accept without hesitation the most important and arduous appointment which the public service of this country includes, powerfully confirm my previous impressions as to your superior qualifications for the high trust for which you are destined.

It will be a great encouragement to you to receive the following extracts from confidential letters.

The one is from a letter of the Queen : 'The more the Queen thinks of it, the more she thinks that Lord Ellenborough would be *far* the most fit person to send to India.'

The other is from the Duke of Wellington :

'There is no doubt that Lord Ellenborough is better qualified than any man in England for the office.'

To succeed Lord Ellenborough in the Cabinet, Sir Robert Peel selected a peer from Ireland, his old friend Fitzgerald.

Memorandum.

I have written to the Queen that I think it would be desirable to confide the Board of Control to a Peer of Parliament; that Scotland is fully represented in the Cabinet by Lords Haddington and Aberdeen; that I think it would be of importance to the Government, in point of feeling in Ireland, to have one Irishman in the Cabinet; that it would be of great advantage to have one member of the Government in the House of Lords with a full knowledge of Ireland and Irish affairs; that I therefore recommend to her Majesty Lord Fitzgerald to succeed Lord Ellenborough at the Board of Control.

A request from Lord Ellenborough to be made Commander-in-Chief as well as Governor-General was politely overruled.

From Lord Ellenborough.

India Board: Oct. 14, 1841.

I enclose a copy of a letter I wrote to the Duke, and his reply, respecting the expediency of giving to the Governor-General the Commission of Captain-General and Commander-in-Chief, which Lord Wellesley had. Will you communicate with the Duke about it, and decide?

To Lord Ellenborough.

Oct. 15, 1841.

My own opinion is in favour of adhering to the recent precedents. It appears to me that Lord Auckland under the usual Commission has exercised every authority, civil and military; and I should recommend us not to anticipate possible cases of future collision, but to take for granted that the power heretofore conferred upon the supreme civil authority will be sufficient for the purpose.

To a remonstrance from Lord Ashley on Lord Fitzgerald's promotion, Sir Robert Peel replied :

Oct. 26, 1841.

Lord Fitzgerald had no more to do with the Roman Catholic Relief Bill in 1829 than you had.

The Duke of Wellington and I were the only parties responsible for the determination to bring in that Bill. Our determination was formed exclusively on our own sense of public duty, and we have no right to transfer this responsibility to any other human being. I shall never disavow, never shrink from, my full share of it.

If those who are alarmed at Lord Fitzgerald's accession to the Cabinet will inquire as to the state of public feeling in Ireland, they will find that the one appointment which has given the most satisfaction to the respectable, sound, intelligent Protestant party in Ireland, is that of Lord Fitzgerald.

That party has always wished him to be their organ in the House of Lords, but people here—I learn it for the first time from your letter—object to this appointment, from an impression so utterly erroneous as that he was the main author of the Relief Bill of 1829.

The Prime Minister soon began to find the heavy burden of Indian affairs, and of difficult relations with the Company, resting largely upon his own shoulders.

To Mr. Arbuthnot.

(*Secret.*)

Feb. 20, 1842.

I assure you that I sympathise with the Duke's feelings in respect to Indian matters, for I have to go through exactly the same ordeal that he has; and, overwhelmed as I am with my own proper business, I find it very difficult to give a satisfactory opinion on many measures which can only be well adjusted after the fullest knowledge of small details, and personal communication with parties concerned.

The Court is becoming a very troublesome body, mainly from the want of efficient control over them. They presume upon the absence of it, and encroach accordingly.

Shortly before Lord Ellenborough sailed Sir Robert Peel had an opportunity of publicly expressing his confidence in him, which evoked a warm response.

From Lord Ellenborough.

Nov. 4, 1841.

I must thank you cordially for your speech last night. You have done me personally a great service, but you have done a yet greater service to the Government you have placed in my hands, by the strength which the expression of your confidence has imparted to it.

I need not assure you that I had rather die in the execution of my duty than prove myself unworthy of the trust you have reposed in me ; and if God should grant me health, I do hope that I may effect much good.

Sir Robert Peel had taken care at once to express to Lord Fitzgerald his anxiety as to the probable effects of a foolish invasion of Afghanistan by Lord Auckland, to set up a puppet Shah.

‘The enclosed paper,’ he wrote, ‘contains a demonstration of the folly of our advance beyond the Indus, and its ruinous consequences to the finances of India. Lord Auckland may have conducted himself with ability and activity in small matters, but his policy in respect to the Afghan country and the restoration of Shah Soojah will far outweigh in point of evil any good he may have effected.’

Nearer the time of the catastrophe, he wrote to an East India Director, Mr. Tucker :

Brighton : March 26, 1842.

I am regarding all that is passing on the North-West frontier of Hindostan with the deepest anxiety. I fear the possibility of a terrible retribution for the most absurd and insane project that was ever undertaken in the wantonness of power.

Before the new Governor-General could reach India this pre-sentiment had been fulfilled. Lord Ellenborough met the tidings with firmness and energy.

H.M.S. 'Cambrian,' Madras Roads: Feb. 21, 1842.

I arrived here this day, and received the disastrous intelligence from Cabul of the murder of Sir W. Macnaghten, and the destruction of the British and native troops at that city. I proceed to Calcutta I hope this evening.

It would be impossible for me to give even a sketch of the measures which it may become expedient to pursue; but the views with which I left England must be materially modified, and the honour of our arms must be re-established in Afghanistan, before it can be safe to contemplate as a practicable course our withdrawal from that country.

In the mean time be tranquil, as long as the native troops behave well. I cannot learn that in Afghanistan there has been any want of gallantry or fidelity on their part, and with these every misfortune is reparable.

You must make it appear to India that your European force can always be replaced, and made adequate to any service that may be demanded from it. I know there will be great difficulty in doing this, but every difficulty should be encountered and overcome, for the preservation of India.

My present impression is that nothing which has occurred in Afghanistan should induce us to make any change in the plans previously adopted for the campaign of this year in China. We must meet a great disaster as the Romans would have met it in their best days, and put forth the whole strength of the Indian Empire, disheartening our enemies by the exhibition of our resources, and still more by our firmness.

Feb. 22.—Let me repeat what you must have often heard me say, that to hold this country you must have a contented army. To content an army, you must show always justice, and often favour. But with a contented army you may retain India, and its hundred millions of subjects, and its forty millions of allies, against every external enemy, and without a single fear.

The Duke of Wellington, discerning the vast importance of the crisis, sent out at once advice to Lord Ellenborough on the military measures required.

Strathfieldsaye : March 31, 1842.

Although I cannot form an exact judgment of what was the state of affairs at the seat of war in January, I am convinced that it was very disastrous, and that our moral force, and our political power and influence, will have received a blow from the effects of which we shall not recover for some time.

There is not a Moslem heart in Asia, from Pekin to Constantinople, which will not vibrate, when reflecting upon the fact that the European ladies, and other females attached to the troops at Cabul, were made over to the tender mercies of the Moslem chief, who had with his own hand murdered the representative of the British Government at the Court of the Sovereign of Afghanistan.

The events reported are more likely to make an impression calculated to be followed by consequences injurious to the Government than those at any time in my contemplation. Your position is an unfortunate one, and it is painful to consider of it. But I think that I have suggested to you the measures best calculated to restore our strength, to secure our position, to acquire the confidence of our subjects, our dependants, and our allies, and particularly of our army.

If you should succeed in these measures, you will save the British nation from the ruin and disgrace of the loss of this great Empire, and you will acquire throughout the world the reputation and respect which you deserve.

It is impossible to impress upon you too strongly the notion of the importance of the restoration of our reputation in the East. Our enemies in France, the United States, and wherever found, are now rejoicing in our disasters and degradation. You will teach them that their triumph is premature.

The Prime Minister also sent encouraging assurances, and suggested to the Governor-General the necessity of well-considered but 'decisive' measures to retrieve the credit of British arms.

Whitehall : April 6, 1842.

Under all the difficulties you may rely upon our entire confidence and strenuous support.

We are fully sensible of the magnitude of the interests placed in jeopardy, and of the paramount importance of maintaining them. We are fully sensible also that the policy of the measures to be adopted must depend upon a variety of local considerations, of which, from the circumstances of distance and the lapse of time, we can be but imperfect judges ; and the same motives which led us to select you for the trust confided to you will induce us cheerfully to commit to you full liberty of action, and to place the most liberal constructions on your decisions, whatever be their result.

The events in Cabul are still a horrible mystery. We have read the last act of the tragedy, but are at a loss to account for the motives of the actors, and for the events which have brought about the terrible result. The conduct of the political agents, of the military commander, of our ally Shah Soojah, of almost everybody—with one glorious exception indeed, that of a woman, Lady Sale—is to us altogether unaccountable.

It seems to us that there never was a case wherein a desperate resolve would have been more consistent, not only with sound policy so far as the honour of the British arms is concerned, but with the personal safety of the parties taking it.

I will say little on the all-important subject of the policy to be hereafter pursued with regard to Afghanistan. It will probably be necessary to take decisive measures for the purpose of retrieving our military credit, and of proving to the world, and to the people of Asia in particular, that treachery shall not go unpunished. But we shall lose nothing ultimately by acting cautiously and deliberately, by securing ourselves against the risk of even greater disasters in Hindostan, or of reiterated failure in our attempt to inflict just retribution on the immediate objects of our vengeance.

The issue of the recent attempts to relieve Sir Robert Sale at Jellalabad is a proof that hasty and ill-concerted measures tend only to aggravate disaster.

Turning to home affairs, Sir Robert Peel proceeds :

The newspapers will give you ample details of the progress and present results of our parliamentary campaign. I feel that confidence in the result which must always accompany the consciousness of acting from pure and honourable motives, and the deep conviction that the course taken is a just and wise one.

I should feel much less confidence than I do if I had acted as a mere instrument in the hands of a powerful majority, and had conciliated their temporary undivided support, by deference to their wishes and opinions.

I have a firm persuasion that ultimate success will reward unflinching perseverance in that course which, having ample means of judging, you are convinced is the right course. But even if this be too sanguine a view, there is at any rate the consolation that failure itself, if you must fail, is honourable.

My relations with her Majesty are most satisfactory. The Queen has acted towards me not merely (as everyone who knew her Majesty's character must have anticipated) with perfect fidelity and honour, but with great kindness and consideration. There is every facility for the despatch of public business, a scrupulous and most punctual discharge of every public duty, and an exact understanding of the relation of a constitutional Sovereign to her advisers.

Our opponents do not act very creditably together. There is in their ranks an impatience of control and authority, and as many independent chiefs as there are among the Afghans.

The recent events in India have not tended to raise the political reputation of those who are responsible for them.

May 4.—The Duke, Lord Fitzgerald, and I concurred in opinion that it would be advisable to accept a sort of

qualified offer made by Sir Jasper Nicolls voluntarily to relinquish the Command in India. We agreed also that Hardinge was better qualified for the Command than any other person. This morning I received a letter from Hardinge declining the offer. I can hardly regret on public grounds his decision. I know not how we could have supplied his place at home.

We are going on very prosperously. Our opponents are shattered as an Opposition by their own differences and feuds. I shall carry all my measures, without the alteration of a single material part of them.

May 6.—I can from my own experience sympathise with your feelings on finding that you have no leisure to *think*, that forms and ceremonies occupy a considerable portion of most valuable time, and that after labouring at the pumps of business till nature is exhausted the vessel hardly remains afloat.

From Lord Ellenborough.

April 5.—You should see my Minute of the 26th of March, proposing to go to the North-West Provinces.

(Extract from Minute.)

A military disaster has been experienced without parallel in the history of India, and the actual position of the detached bodies of troops is such as to excite the most serious apprehensions of further and inevitable calamity.

There is enough publicly known to lead all men to the conclusion that it is expedient that at the earliest possible period the person possessing the highest authority in the country should take a position near the scene of action, where information may be quickly received, and orders given with promptitude, and I am convinced that it will be the universal expectation in England that this will be done.

It is my decided opinion that it ought to be done, and I declare that I consider it essential to the interests of India that the Governor-General should proceed to the Upper

Provinces, and be clothed with all the power with which the law enables the Council to invest him.

Sir Robert Peel had warned Lord Ellenborough against over-hasty action, but his precipitation took an unexpected form in imperative orders for evacuation of Afghanistan without first rescuing the British captives in Cabul. These orders, issued in April, were not recalled until July. In the meantime, General Pollock, having some excuse from the season, took the responsibility of disregarding them, and advised General Nott to do the same.¹ Sir Robert Peel officially approved the orders, but with reluctance, and against his own instinct.

To Lord Fitzgerald.

July 6, 1842.

Considering the distance of both time and space, the inferiority of our means of judging and of our information, the little advantage there could be in intimating dissatisfaction with a policy already resolved on and in course of execution, there is no alternative but to approve.

I think it questionable, however, whether orders should have been given for the immediate withdrawal of our troops. Advance to Cabul may be unwise, or even impracticable, but I should have been inclined to keep our troops in their present positions, or on the frontier, until some sort of settlement had been made in Afghanistan, and should appear to be the result of our recent successes.

The correctness of these impressions was soon illustrated by Pollock's brilliant success in forcing the Khyber Pass, but the Governor-General's orders were still to retire, even after what he calls 'my victory.'

From Lord Ellenborough.

Allahabad: May 17, 1842.

At last we have got a victory, and our military character is re-established. Sir R. Sale has completely defeated the Afghans under the walls of Jellalabad. Major-General Pollock has forced the Khyber Pass.

¹ Low's *Life of Sir George Pollock*, p. 297.

The victory does not change my opinion. Send us every man you can. We need them all, as you will see, when you read the letter to the Secret Committee.

I am making the most of my victory with the troops, here and everywhere.

I trust you have taken the same view that I have—namely, that there is no longer an adequate object for keeping our troops above the passes, the character of our arms being *in a measure* restored, by Sale and Pollock.

Those officers are ordered to retire, as soon as the season will permit.

I believe the army is in good humour. I have done all I could for this first object.

I have told General Pollock that I will exchange prisoners, but not ransom them, and that he must have as much regard for the last Sepoy as for the first European.

I have an excellent man, Mr. Mansell, at work upon reductions of expenditure, but I can effect nothing permanently without an entire change of system in the financial department, and in the mode of conducting the general government.

I wish to leave something that may survive me, and be of permanent utility to the People. I do not know whether there is any word in Hindostan for 'the People,' but I think not.

The hastiness of Lord Ellenborough's judgment was further shown by his sweeping condemnation of all the officers, including the two able Generals, with whom he had to work.

June 7.—I am very thankful for your generous support. We shall want all the troops you can send. . . . The cost will be enormous, but I do trust that by means of this cost and of these measures we shall be in a state of security by January.

I really believe that the late events in Upper Afghanistan, and the manner in which the conduct of the troops has been spoken of and rewarded, have together re-established the spirit of the army. The feeling of humiliation is gone,

and they are in good spirits, because they know their good conduct will be appreciated.

There is, however, really no officer who can execute orders, and no civilian who will. I speak of the political people. They are deeply poisoned by their ambition, and they do not act fairly with the Governor-General. Two I have put out. More must probably go. They will soon learn that there is a Government.

The Generals, Nott and Pollock, have not a grain of military talent. The latter has fallen into the hands of two or three young political assistants, and has not acted lately upon his own view of what is right. He would otherwise have been before this on the left bank of the Indus, and safe.

I am in anxious hope that Hardinge will come out. But arriving now he must take care of his health. The heat is tremendous ; it is impossible to encounter it in the day.

I am obliged, as you may suppose, to use strong words, and to do strong things, now and then. There is resistance to the attempt on the part of a Governor-General to establish a Government. But when men find that there will be a Government as long as I remain here, they will begin to aid me, instead of trying to thwart me.

On May 13 Pollock had written boldly to the Governor-General regretting the orders to Nott to retire, but not till June did Lord Ellenborough give leave to remain even till October.

At last on July 4 he so far indirectly recalled his orders for evacuation as to give to one of the Generals with 'not a grain of military talent' the option of marching on Cabul, the heavy responsibility to be on him. The other General was given permission, if he thought fit, to support him, but in that case he was to bring with him to India the gates of Mahmoud's tomb at Ghuznee.

July 6.—The position of affairs in Lower Afghanistan is so much improved since the 19th of April, when I directed General Nott to withdraw to the Indus by the route of

Quetta, that I have ventured, after placing before him all the perils of the march upon Ghuznee and Cabul, to allow him the option of retiring by that route, or by the one originally indicated to him.

On hearing of this, Sir Robert Peel wrote to Lord Fitzgerald :

Dalkeith Palace : Sept. 5, 1842.

I feel very confident that your despatch to Lord Ellenborough will be what it ought to be. It is impossible for anyone, writing at such a distance, to convey any other than general opinions. If positive instructions were sent, the lapse of time and change of circumstances might probably make them wholly inapplicable to the state of affairs at the moment of their receipt.

We have indeed had decisive proof, not only that precise instructions cannot be sent, but that approbation of any particular line of policy adopted on the spot must be guardedly expressed ; for we have seen sudden changes of policy on the part of those who are on the spot.

Ellenborough writes to me as if he regretted now the order for retreat which he had given.

Lord Auckland wrote to me a very civil private letter, offering to call. I was just on the point of leaving London, but deferred my departure, as I thought it right, you being absent, that I should avail myself of the offer.

He was very friendly and cordial. I asked him if I might speak to him on Indian affairs with perfect unreserve. He said I might. The important part of his communication was to this effect. He thought Lord Ellenborough was alienating the Civil Service from him, and did not sufficiently bear in mind that, unless he used the instruments which were within his reach, he could do little or nothing. Aid he must have, and it rested with himself whether that aid should be given cordially and zealously, or with sullenness and reluctance.

The most important declaration that Lord Auckland made was in favour of the abandonment of Afghanistan as soon as it could be decently effected.

From Lord Fitzgerald.

Wednesday, [Sept. 8, 1842.]

I have had much satisfaction from your letter. I had the Duke's concurrence in the despatch.

I have promised acquiescence and full support to the Government of Lord Ellenborough, but approbation I could not express, seeing that I think his first orders were precipitately given.

Hardinge laments Ellenborough's hasty order, when the troops could not march till October. He thinks that Nott will not undertake the march to Cabul, and that the responsibility which Ellenborough threw on him will deter him.

Lord Auckland I have not yet seen. The work I have had, which has taken me the best part of twenty-four hours for many days, made it quite impossible.

He says truly that Lord Ellenborough will have the whole Civil Service against him. The letters now arrived say that he insults, or treats with contempt, all the highest servants. It is very unfortunate that such capacity should be so marred.

I suspect that the Duke thinks I ought to have gone further in approbation of Lord Ellenborough. But I do not think I ought. I will not be responsible for him, of all men, beyond what my own duty demands.

In his letter to Lord Ellenborough, the Duke says, 'Lord Fitzgerald thinks it necessary, and *some* of the Cabinet are of the same opinion, that he should write strongly about the prisoners;' and he proceeds to add, rather slightly, 'The press is getting up a clamour about the women and the unburied bones of our soldiers, but *you* must not mind what the press says.'²

Now, I thought that the Cabinet saw the necessity of writing about the prisoners as strongly as I did. Certainly I did not hear a word against it.

² In substance (not in words) the Duke says this in a letter of Sept. 3.

given in Ellenborough's *Indian Administration*, page 290.

Sept. 9.—The tone of Lord Ellenborough's communication to you is apologetic. He endeavours to justify his first precipitate orders to General Nott.

He concluded that General England's army was lost. Why did he so conclude? Why not wait till he had further information?

If the armies do 'return in triumph,' we shall not have to thank the Governor-General for the march from Candahar to Cabul.

I beg of you, if you think it called for, to set me right with the Queen, if there be any misconception as to my not having written to her on Indian affairs, while she was on a tour of pleasure.

As Lord Ellenborough takes upon himself to write directly to her Majesty (which I believe to be as improper as it is unprecedented), some letter may have come from him, which may give to my not having made any communication the appearance of carelessness, a want of respect.

To Lord Fitzgerald.

Drummond Castle : Sept. 11, 1842.

I do not approve of Lord Ellenborough's order to General Nott. It places him, in my opinion, in an embarrassing situation, by devolving specially upon him an extent of responsibility which he ought not to bear.

It may be very right to suggest the various considerations which present themselves to the mind of a distant spectator, and which require to be maturely weighed by the responsible actor on the spot. But it is very possible to do this without disheartening him, and distracting him by alarming views of the peril he may incur, whatever be his decision.

I am convinced that nothing but very severe and overpowering necessity should induce us to abandon the prisoners in Cabul. Apart from any sentimental feeling—which, however, I by no means abjure—I think we should incur the risk of material loss—loss of reputation and of honour, which constitute strength and make our name

formidable—by abandoning, without one effort consistent with common prudence, those who are held captive by perfidious savages.

These views were imparted with tact to Lord Ellenborough.

Windsor Castle : Sept. 24, 1842.

The point of immediate interest is the decision which General Nott may have taken.

Forming my judgment of him from the public letters which I have seen from him, which evince great resolution and zeal for the public service, I should presume that he was capable of exercising a sound discretion in the very important matter in which he will have to decide.

I shall rejoice if, after weighing the serious consequences of failure, and deliberately calculating the means of conveyance and subsistence, and the probability of resistance, and the power to overcome it, his decision shall be in favour of the advance upon Cabul.

There are in this country very strong feelings of sympathy with the prisoners detained in custody by the Afghans. Apart from all political considerations, one would be inclined from the impulse alone of generous feelings to make great sacrifices for them. But political considerations also would fully justify such sacrifices. I should apprehend that the continued captivity and the maltreatment of such a person as Lady Sale would awaken very deep and general sympathy throughout India, and that our inability to rescue her and her companions in misfortune would make that unfavourable impression with regard to our power which is in itself an element of weakness.

We may indeed fail in rescuing them, but the unfavourable effect of failure will be greatly diminished if every effort be made to save them.

A temporary occupation of Cabul will be a consolation to millions whose feelings have been wounded by our late disasters, and would aid us materially in bringing to a conclusion those relations with Afghanistan in which we

have been involved by the presumptuous and reckless folly of others.

I shall be glad, therefore, to hear that General Nott has felt himself justified in advancing on Cabul.

To Lord Fitzgerald.

Drayton Manor: Oct. 9, 1842.

It is quite clear, I think, that Ellenborough's views in respect to military operations in Afghanistan were much too desponding, and that the unfortunate order for retreat was precipitately and needlessly issued.

From Lord Fitzgerald.

Oct. 11, 1842.

All that has passed, and still more all that we hope for, tends to prove how precipitate were Lord Ellenborough's first orders, how fortunate Pollock's compelled though not reluctant delay.

Certainly Lord Ellenborough seems rather to overrate the terms of approbation which he says have been expressed from home.

We fully sanctioned his project. We declared that in supporting him we should do so cordially, we felt that at a distance we could not judge, and that we must rely on him who was alone able to decide. But we repeated more than once that we did so under the conviction, which he had impressed on us, that 'there was no safe alternative.'

I felt from the beginning, and you felt as strongly, the necessity, if it were possible, of effecting the liberation of the prisoners before the final evacuation of Afghanistan; and the retrograde march to Peshawur, ordered first by Lord Auckland and afterwards by Lord Ellenborough, was in both instances unknown to us, until the orders had been issued. Happily they were not acted on!

You will see, however, from the Duke of Wellington's letter to Lord Ellenborough that he goes much further, and almost appears to regret the later contradictory orders.

He goes the length of saying that Lord E. has behaved handsomely to his Generals ! and approves of his ordering the bringing away of the gates as a trophy, though he admits that there are neither means nor time for the recapture of Ghuznee !

To Sir James Graham.

Oct. 12, 1842.

I am heartily glad that Nott has determined to advance on Cabul. Absolute failure would be no greater evil than abandonment of Afghanistan without an effort. 'Where there is a will, there is a way,' will prove true of the route from Candahar to Cabul. The resolution to advance will probably ensure the downfall of Akbar, and the delivery of the prisoners, without a blow.

I hope we shall be able to dispense with any increase to the army. Considering the result of Ashburton's mission, and the state of the revenue, there is every motive for strict economy.

To Lord Fitzgerald.

Oct. 12.—Whatever may be the result of General Nott's advance on Cabul—and I think there is every reason to anticipate a successful one—I shall never regret his decision.

I believe it to be a wise one. I doubt whether absolute failure will not be preferable to the abandonment of the Afghan territory without an effort to resume possession of Cabul and release the prisoners.

Lord Ellenborough should not construe the unwillingness to disturb decisions, or apparent decisions, by the expression of regret and dissent, into approbation.

From Lord Ellenborough.

Allahabad : Aug. 16, 1842.

My belief is that we shall recover guns and prisoners, and show our arms in triumph at Ghuznee and Cabul, and

have withdrawn our armies with honour by the first of January.

I am gratified to find that you have hitherto seen reason to approve of what I have done.

From Lord Fitzgerald.

Oct. 19.—Much of my time is occupied in endeavours to preserve harmony between the Governor-General and the Court of Directors.

It is hard that, if even a nuance of difference arises between me and the Court, it is because I have tried to soften down matters, and to reconcile all parties.

But now the plot thickens. I send to you a despatch from the Supreme Council, complaining of being kept in ignorance of the measures of Government, in violation of the Act of Parliament.

The terms of their remonstrance are moderate, and by addressing it to the Committee, instead of to the Court, it is for the present kept a secret. The Committee, however, take it up very warmly, and the Chairs now call upon me to answer the representation.

You are aware that despatches from the Court are composed at the India Office, and submitted to this Board for approbation. We alter and amend them as we think fitting, but the original draft comes from the Court.

Not so with the Secret Committee. They are not the organ of communication. All despatches from the Secret Committee are written in this office, it being mandatory on them to transmit such to India!

The Committee now requires of me to reply to the Council's remonstrance. For the moment I escape by the answer that I await the Governor-General's explanation.

I am quite ready to stand in the breach, and, so far as the law will allow me, to resist any step being taken which would lead to injurious consequences in the present state of our Empire in the East. But it is right that you should know all.

Supposing that Lord Ellenborough perseveres in defiance of the law, and in contempt of the remonstrance of those who are responsible for acts of government, keeping them in entire ignorance of what measures he has decided (for they dispute not his supreme and controlling power), can we expect to stave off the questions which will inevitably arise?

Will Hobhouse, will the friends of Auckland, or will Palmerston allow such topics to sleep?

To Lord Fitzgerald.

Oct. 20, 1842.

I am sorry to see the tendency to disagreement between authorities whose harmonious action and good understanding are essential to the successful administration of public affairs. There never was a moment in the history of India when the advantage, nay the necessity, for cordial co-operation was more apparent.

It is impossible entirely to justify the language used by Lord Ellenborough. It certainly seems quite unnecessary to infer that the Governor-General will not receive the support of the Court of Directors, or to menace retirement, in the most distant manner.

There is nothing of which I think much worse than the menace of retirement by an executive officer conveyed without adequate necessity to the department with which he is connected. It must be a strong case indeed which could justify the retirement of a Governor-General on the ground of his not being supported. I care not who might be the Governor-General, but if I found him threatening resignation without cause, for the purpose of preventing the fair and temperate expression of honest differences of opinion, so far as I am concerned, I would spare him the necessity for resignation, by removing him from his office.

Nor. 2.—I think the Duke's letter respecting the withholding of information from the Bengal Council an excellent one, though I agree with you that there are expressions in

it which it might be as well not to communicate to Lord Ellenborough.

Could you not write to him a private letter stating that you had communicated confidentially with the Duke, and had received in reply a letter to the effect of what you are writing to him ?

From Lord Ellenborough.

Simla : Sept. 15, 1842.

I have made the last efforts diplomatically, by intimating to Mahomed Akbar that if the prisoners are not exchanged forthwith, his wife and children will be removed from Loodiana, and that it is under consideration whether they should not be sent to England, where 'he must be aware that the Government cannot educate children in the Mahometan faith, and there are no means of doing so.'

In September, Nott took and destroyed Ghuznee, and Pollock occupied the citadel and city of Cabul. Nott obeyed Ellenborough's orders by bringing back to India 'the gates of Son-nauth,' while Pollock rescued the 128 British prisoners, including nine British ladies and their children.

From Lord Fitzgerald.

Nov. 22, 1842.

The news of to-day is most gratifying. We, of course, can have nothing official as yet, but the details which the papers contain of all the results in China and in Northern India are all that we could have wished, and more than I had ventured to hope.

Nott and Pollock have set all right.

From Sir James Graham.

Nov. 23, 1842.

I send the last Gazette, which announces the safety and restoration of the captives. You must consider the prompt distribution of honours and rewards. They have been nobly won, they should be generously bestowed.

I regard these successes as a merciful interposition of that Divine Providence which ordereth all things well, and which is able in a moment to turn darkness into light.

To Lord Fitzgerald.

Nov. 23, 1842.

What we have achieved by decisive means, makes one tremble to think of what would have been the result of distrust and despondency.

From Lord Ellenborough.

Simla : Oct. 5, 1842.

I hope you will be satisfied with the Indian Army. It has gained three victories, taken Ghuznee and Cabul, and recovered all the prisoners, in forty-two days.

I enclose a proclamation signed by me on the day after I received the news. I know that it is unanswerable in reasoning. It will make the members of the late Government very angry, but the people of England will approve of it, and all military men will say I am right.

I have no official information yet of the gates of the Temple of Somnauth having been brought away from Ghuznee, but I have no doubt they have been. I shall place them in the hands of the Hindoo chiefs, and they will be passed from chief to chief through all India in triumph to Somnauth.

I have prepared a letter to the several chiefs, in which I hope I have succeeded in going to the heart of the Hindoo, without offending the Mussulman.

Our revenue is rapidly improving. I shall be able to pay my way till the first of January, and after that I think we shall be safe.

Because we shall then be safe, do not forget that we have been in the most imminent danger. Another great reverse would have produced a regular Mussulman insurrection, and there would have been extensive desertions in the army, as well as a combination of native Princes.

I do not believe I could have allowed the advance of General Nott to Cabul one day sooner with safety, and without his support General Pollock would not have been strong enough to get away from Cabul, although he might have got there.

However, it is all done now.

The gates of Somnauth were said to have been taken thence, A.D. 1024, by Sultan Mahmoud, and adorned his tomb. They never went back to the Hindoo deity's ruined temple, but lie still at Agra.

Lord Ellenborough to the Duke of Wellington.

Oct. 4, 1842.

It seems to me most unwise, when we are sure of the hostility of one-tenth, not to secure the enthusiastic support of the nine-tenths which are faithful; and, avoiding everything which could be justly offensive to the Mahometans, I would make the most of our successes and of the recovery of the gates of the temple, treating it ostensibly as a great military triumph, but knowing very well that the Hindoos will value it as the guarantee of the future security of themselves and their religion against Mussulmans.

In congratulating Lord Ellenborough on the victories, the Duke of Wellington expressed approval of his policy and strategy from first to last.

Strathfieldsaye: Dec. 1, 1842.

I have written to you by every overland despatch my opinion upon the state of affairs, and upon your orders, after I had obtained a knowledge of the reports made to you, and of the state of facts of which you had a knowledge at the moment at which you gave such orders. I have with regularity written my approbation of them all. You have my letters written at the time. The perusal of them must be more satisfactory than anything that I can now state in this moment of success and exultation. I com-

municated them regularly, as soon as written, to the President of the Board of Control. I am ready at any moment to defend the opinions which I have entertained and given.

Lord Fitzgerald wrote to Sir Robert Peel :

Dec. 2, 1842.

To me it seems a most questionable act, and likely to give deep offence to our Mahometan Sepoys and subjects—the removing of these gates and other trophies from Mahmoud's tomb.

But it is not the last difficulty in which Lord Ellenborough will involve us, in despite of his success, and notwithstanding his ability.

Sir Robert Peel's letter of congratulation was hardly less warm than the Duke's, but does full justice to General Nott, and indicates the trouble to be expected in Parliament from the Simla Proclamation.

To Lord Ellenborough.

Whitehall : Dec. 3, 1842.

The intelligence brought by the special mail has given universal satisfaction. Everyone feels that since the battle of Waterloo no tidings have reached this country so important as those which simultaneously announced the termination of hostilities in Central Asia and in China.

As it always appeared to me that advance to Cabul, with all the risks attendant upon it, was preferable to any other course, I need not say how gratified I have been by the complete success which hitherto at least has crowned the operations.

General Nott, considering the responsibility under which his determination to advance was taken, deserves the highest praise. He has fully confirmed the favourable impressions which all the letters from him that I saw (and I had nothing else to judge by) made upon my mind.

Your proclamation from Simla has appeared in the newspapers here, and has provoked, on account of its censure of the policy of our predecessors, much and very angry comment.

It will be argued that it conveys a reflection not merely upon the acts of particular Ministers, but upon a course of public policy adopted with the sanction of the Sovereign, and that it is not becoming that a Governor-General, considering his relation to the Queen, should censure in direct terms, and in a public proclamation addressed to the people of India, acts which must be considered as acts of the Queen.

This is the course which will probably be taken by our opponents in Parliament. They, of course, are very much mortified by the reflections on the position in which they left affairs in the East.

As the policy announced is a wise one, and as the reasons for it are just, and as both policy and reasons will meet with the concurrence of a great majority of the people of this country, the partisans of the late Government will not, I apprehend, be able to make much of objections to the proclamation on less substantial grounds.

I cannot conclude without congratulating you most sincerely on all that has occurred, and expressing an earnest wish that relief from the labour and anxiety inevitably connected with the state of affairs in China and Central Asia will leave you at full liberty to establish those reforms in the civil and financial government of India without which victories in the field must be fruitless, so far as the permanent welfare and tranquillity of the country are concerned.

This letter does not mention General Pollock, but his biographer, who complains of the meagre terms in which the Duke of Wellington acknowledged his services, is perfectly satisfied with the meed of praise bestowed on them in Parliament by Sir Robert Peel. 'It was reserved,' he writes, 'for the head of her Majesty's Government to place Sir George Pollock's

services in their true light, and by the exhibition of his eloquence and classical attainments to cast a glow upon a debate rather barren of those qualities. . . . This handsome recognition from so eminent a man as Sir Robert Peel was ever a source of gratification to Sir George Pollock.'²

² *Life of Sir George Pollock*, pp. 472-474.

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME

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